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Burning Questions in Historic Christianity

JOHN ALFRED FAULKNER
Professor of Church History in Drew University

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PREFACE

Though the questions discussed in these pages are of fascinating interest, and some of them of vital importance, the writer has tried to disassociate himself entirely from their practical bearing, and in the true spirit of an historian to seek diligently and impartially for the truth alone, regardless of consequences, and to state that truth clearly, as interestingly as possible, and as fully as the space allows. So far as he knows, nowhere else have these engaging problems in the history of Christianity been placed together and considered in manageable compass.

While in theology, philosophy, politics, or other subjects, every reader can test a book by his own sense of reason, truth, etc., this is impossible in the questions agitated here, which rest not on what the writer thinks ought to be true, but on what he finds has been true. For this reason it has been necessary to refer to original sources and to modern authorities. But the reader who has no time nor care to look up these matters may entirely ignore the notes.

Two or three of these studies have appeared in part in the London Quarterly Review and in the Methodist Quarterly Review (Nashville), and the editors are thanked for permission to use them again.

Theological Seminary of Drew University,
Madison, New Jersey.

CHAPTER I

DID CHRIST INSTITUTE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

So far as I can find, the first to throw doubt on the institution of the Eucharist by Christ was the eminent rationalist H. E. G. Paulus, professor at Jena 1789-1803 and at Heidelberg 1811-51[1] His idea was that since the oldest eyewitness, Matthew, does not give the command to repeat, and since following the example of the Passover repetition would naturally come, the command is a later gloss.

Few followed Paulus until in 1892 Jülicher, professor in Marburg, wrote a popular essay. Since then Spitta, Grafe, Mensinga, J. Hoffmann, Brandt, Schmiedel, Schmidt (Cornell University), Percy Gardner, and many others have taken that point of view.[2] The reasons alleged for this view are:

(1) Mark's account of the institution is the most reliable, and he does not mention any suggestion or command to continue a Lord's Supper. If he built on Peter, who was at the Last Supper, there is all the less reason for belief in such a command.

(2) Matthew, who was there, also makes no mention.

(3) Luke simply follows Paul, and, besides, some ancient authorities omit "This do in my remembrance" from Luke 22. 19. While Westcott and Hort retain this passage, they put it in double brackets. This leaves no sure witness in the Gospels. The truer tradition knew of no institution.

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[1] See his *Philologisch-Kritischer Kommentar über das N. T.*, 3 vols., 1800–04, vol. 3, p. 589, and his *Exegetisches Handbuch über drei ersten Evangelien*, 3 vols. 1830–33, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 527.

[2] Space will not allow titles of their books, but full information will be found in Schaefer, *Das Herrenmahl* (1897), pp. 1–49, and in Frischkopf, *Die Nuesten Erörterungen über die Abendmahlsfrage* (1921), pp. 155–87. See also his list of books, pp. v-vii.

(4) Paul indeed has it, but he follows another tradition, or fills out his account from vision or wrong information.

(5) The shorter the story (Mark), the more reliable. It is easier and more natural to enlarge than to condense.

(6) There came to be a feeling that Christ was the Passover lamb. As the Last Supper and crucifixion were about the same time as this feast, there naturally grew up a repetition of a Supper. No institution was needed. And from the memories of that Supper the disciples would go on to a celebration of Christ's death, which taking place in connection with an institution, that is, of the Passover, would inevitably lead to the conception of their Suppers as instituted by Jesus. Psychologically, there could not help but be a Lord's Supper.

(7) Religious meals were common both in Judaism and heathenism, and Christians were bound to have them, and to associate them with an institution by their Founder.

(8) Christ was too humble and meek to found a celebration in his honor.

(9) He expected to return in a short time, therefore would be the less likely to start a remembrance Supper.

On the other side there are two possibilities. Christ may be thought of as using the words about doing this in my remembrance which Paul and Luke (in the best texts) say that he did and which the others do not contradict, or he may be thought of as sometime in the forty days founding the Supper by words or acts or both, so that in either possibility it goes back in his direction or influence or suggestion.

(1) Mark is, of course, a reliable Gospel. It is to be accepted for what it tells us, but does not mean that what it does not tell us is false.

(2) If Matthew followed Mark, he might naturally

omit the "This do." And especially as Mark and Matthew wrote at a time when the Supper was taken as a matter of course everywhere and as instituted by Jesus, they would have no special motive to give the "This do."

(3) We cannot so easily get rid of Luke. If we follow some of the best and most primitive manuscripts and assume that the reading, "This do in remembrance," is genuine, we have to remember that Luke—speaking after the manner of men—is the most painstaking and conscientious of the evangelists, deliberately committed to accuracy, and to giving a full and thoroughly truthful account of the life and words of the Master. See his introduction. We should not therefore hastily imagine that Luke recorded the "my remembrance" words without inquiry and without satisfying himself that they were actually spoken. The Gospels were indeed not written with concern for a parrotlike reproduction, which would have been impossible without a series of arbitrary miracles, but atmosphere and content assure us that substantial truth was all in all to the writers, who were ready to die for the truth and did die for it.

(4) If Paul was mistaken in the "remembrance" words, it is the only case, so far as we know, where he was mistaken in referring directly or indirectly to facts in Christ's life. Besides, he spent fifteen days in Jerusalem with Peter, and also saw James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1. 18, 19). It is hardly likely so inquisitive a mind would not make inquiries as to the Lord, so that when he did tell of his life or words he would not make a balk. We know also that Paul was more anxious than we might naturally suppose for the "observance of the traditions ye have received from us," and was not at all inclined to brook carelessness as to fact, custom, belief, etc. His concern for order, intelligence, and the lines that held the Christians was surprising. That he should be wrongly informed as to the institution of the Eucharist, or indif-

ferent as to the pertinent facts on a subject so vital to even the moral standing of the Corinth church, is unthinkable.

Then he says he "received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That," etc. (1 Cor. 11. 23). This was an amazing effort on his part to lend extraordinary importance to his account of the institution, as though he wanted to burn every word upon the Corinth believers' volatile and sensuous minds (true Greeks!). His reference to the "do in my remembrance" was not for their information, not even mainly to give a full narrative, but was for its moral effect only: "If Christ instituted this Supper to keep his life, death, etc., as a lasting memorial to his people, as you all know and believe, how can you Corinthians turn it into a drunken feast?" As to how he received from the Lord what he tells them we have no sure way of knowing, and scholars are hopelessly divided. But we *are* sure that Paul believed his account rested, whether directly or indirectly, on actual impartation of the fact to him by Christ.

I think it is also not out of place to say that Paul, as became a trained mind, was not indifferent to correctness, historical sequence, places, names, and other marks of a man who knew the value, uses and proper relationships of words and things. When he wrote 1 Cor. 11. 23 he had a sense of responsibility, not of a modern scholar as to exact repetition of a source, but of one who stood for life and death behind his words.

(5) Nor is it true that a condensed account is always more original or accurate or valuable, nor that the natural impulse is to expand. Whether the writer will abbreviate or enlarge depends entirely upon his point of view and purpose. Why is Mark's the shortest Gospel? Because he was writing for Romans, men of action, men of deeds, not words, who wanted a short, vivid, strong narrative. Therefore he sifted his traditions and sources,

and plunged into the center of the flood. That does not mean at all that what he leaves out he disbelieves or thinks unimportant. It simply means that it was not his intention to tell all Christ's words or deeds. We have no more right to think that Christ did not say "Do this as a memorial to me" because the first two Gospels omit it, than we have to think he did not say the parable of the prodigal son because these Gospels omit it. The longest account of the Supper leaves many things unsaid. But the shortest account of the Supper says enough to show that Christ was "starting something,"[3] and was acting as if founding an institution.

(6) That the associations and sacred memories of the Last Supper might of themselves lead to what we call the Lord's Supper, without the "Do this in my remembrance," is possible. But is it probable? Notice. The crucifixion left the disciples confounded. When they recovered themselves their first thought was, "I go a fishing." They were not dreamers, nursing fond illusions, waiting for visions. After the Day of Pentecost there is a different story. But it does not appear that without the baptism of that day and, in consequence, the founding of the church in which were observed the Brotherhood Meals (Breakings of Bread, Lord's Suppers), we should ever have heard of our Eucharists.

(7) Religious meals were common in antiquity. But religious meals in special remembrance of a carpenter crucified on charges of crime, whose death as the Son of God achieved (as was supposed by all his followers) salvation to the whole world, was never heard of in antiquity. So-called saviours were heard of, a woman semigoddess who brought fruitful seasons was heard of, but

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[3] The view that the short account must be better does not impress Haupt. He says the suggestion of Christ to repeat the Supper could be more easily omitted than added, as every celebration was in itself an obedience to an instruction to repeat. To invent the command later, therefore, would be superfluous. Its very presence in the source shows its originality. See Haupt, *Ueber die urspringliche Form und Bedeutung der Abendmahlsworte*, 1894, p. 25. See also the excellent remarks of Schultzen, *Das Abendmahl im N. T.*, 1895, p. 18.

there was only one Jesus of Nazareth, to whom regular meals, though sacred, were held.

(8) Christ was indeed meek and lowly of heart, but in the context of the very text which makes this strange claim for one "without whom not anything was made which was made" divinity is asserted. He united lowliness and loftiness, humility with the astounding boast of having at his disposal legions of angels, modesty with the blasphemy of being the Son of God, on which (if not true) he was justly crucified, and lowliness with the claim of being the touchstone of the fate of mankind.[4]

(9) We can easily exaggerate Christ's expectation of a near return. As looking over successive mountain peaks, so Christ saw his return in a perspective of near and far—near the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish church state, near the flight in the winter or the call which takes one from the field and leaves another at work, and far the end of the world and the Coming to judgment; but all his comings, the far and final, were involved in the near. Matt. 26. 29 does not necessarily mean his return except in the sense of spiritual fellowship with the disciples after Pentecost, or the larger table communion in paradise. Christ's reckoning of near and far was the arithmetic of heaven: one day as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. He used the comparison of the slow rising yeast, the farmer waiting for the harvest, the blade, the ear, the corn. As to the time of his return the Father alone knew, he said, but the Son was not quite so ignorant as to expect that the preaching of the gospel to the whole world would be a short process—a quarter of the twentieth century has gone, and it is yet in the long, long distance. We may assume some intelligence of Christ in such matters.

(10) There is something in the remark of Schleiermacher that the command, "Do this," etc., is rather in-

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[4] See remark of Clemen, *Der Ursprung des heil. Abendmahls*, 1898, p. 31.

distinct than direct and imperative[5] ("as oft as ye drink," etc.). Christ's orders as to symbolic or religious acts were rather suggestive than commanding, not as an army general. "Shake off the dust of your feet," "Ye shall wash each other's feet," etc. No one felt the first was to be literally followed, and it was a long time before the church took up the other. So there was much liberty as to the Suppers, both as to their ideas and their form. Still a command is a command whether strict or loose, and to the disciple of Jesus his freest suggestion would be an order.

(11) Nor does a command cover a rite. The earliest Lord's Suppers were Breakings of Bread, that is, regular meals in which loving disciples saw in bread and wine the symbols of that body and blood to which they owed their salvation. The meal was not a ceremony, not a religious service in our sense. Much less was it a somber artificial celebration, where social freedom characteristic of the primitive church is at a minimum and the liturgical elaborateness, so prevalent except in smaller bodies where the apostolic simplicity has been deliberately retained or revived, is at a maximum. As in baptism, church organization, worship, so in the Supper Christ left no rules, forms, rites, regulations.[6]

(12) The mere fact—and it is a fact—of the continuous use of the Supper from the very foundation of the church after Pentecost does not prove in itself its establishment by Christ by act or recommendation, but it is thoroughly congenial to that inference. It is a natural

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[5] *Der Christliche Glaube*, vol. ii, §132. p. 372, R. A. Hoffmann seems to think that even Luther left in doubt whether Christ instituted the Supper. See his *Die Abendmahlsgedanken Jesu Christi*, 1896, p. 99. But what Luther says relates solely to the use of both kinds (bread and wine) in the Supper. "They do not sin against Christ who use one species, for Christ has not laid it down as a precept that both should be used, but left it to each one's free choice saying, 'As often as you do this, do it in my memory.'"—*De Captiv. babyl. ecclesiae*, in Erl. Ausg. of his *Opera lat. var. arg.*, vol. 5, p. 28.

[6] Comp. Spitta, *Die urchristlichen Traditionen über Ursprung und Sinn des Abendmahls*, in *Zur Geschichte und Literatur des Urchristentums*, 1893, pp. 287–88. This epoch-making essay has some brilliant constructions, and made a deep impression. I have gone into it in the London Quarterly Review, Oct., 1927, pp. 188ff. Its influence is still with us.

conclusion. And when we remember that within fifteen or twenty years after Pentecost, Paul speaks of that establishment in a way that argues the acceptance everywhere of the Supper as thus founded, the reasons for holding to the reliability of the earliest attested traditions are in my judgment convincing. In support we have strong historical evidences, and on the other side only the negative though not contradictory point of the silence of the recommendation by two later witnesses whose silence can fairly be explained.

(13) Finally, this evidence is so appealing that it has won the assent of even so-called liberal scholars. Weizsäcker says that the Lord's Supper was based, according to both Paul and the Gospels, "on the command made by Jesus at the close of a common meal taken on the last evening of his life. Every assumption (such as the psychological of Jülicher) of its having originated from the recollection of the intercourse with him at the table, the necessity felt for recalling his death, is precluded. The celebration was from the beginning,"[7] therefore there was no time for the working of these secondary causes. Harnack was much impressed by Spitta, though more as to the meaning of the Supper (namely, as a Messianic banquet meal of joy) than as to its nonestablishment by Jesus. But even so he hesitates to give full recognition to Spitta's exposition. "The words (1 Cor. 11. 23), 'For I received from the Lord what I also delivered unto you,' are too strong for me."[8]

Lobstein thinks that even though Mark does not mention the request for repetition, it is fully authenticated by Paul.[9] Haupt (professor N. T. in Halle) is of the same judgment. He says that the words "This do," etc., agree exactly with the situation in the Last Supper. That situation was this: both Jesus and the disciples felt the need of communion. It was a farewell meal. What thought was nearer than that for the *time of separation* ("until he come") he should lay on their hearts the enduring reminder of him and especially of his highest proof of love: Forget not that I have died for you. That meant that the repetition of what Jesus had done that night should be the means and the form by which the memory of him should be kept alive. The words "Do this," etc., are for Paul the chief thing in his account. 1 Cor. 11. 26 is only a commentary on these words. As they repeat the act of Jesus the society not only brings his death in remembrance, but the Lord's Supper is itself a confession by the society of Christ and his death. "Therefore is there no ground for believing that Jesus did not recommend the repetition of his act, but such recommendation is on inner grounds in the highest degree probable." If the society would do what the Lord urged, they would find that he would give himself for the food of their soul.[10] (Even Grafe, though he thinks the disciples would have held a Lord's Supper in any case, will not decide against the "Do this," but says if Christ really spoke these words, he certainly did not mean them in the sense of founding a rite. If we take the word "rite" here as emphatic, as was probably Grafe's meaning, he is absolutely right.)[11]

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[7] *The Apostolic Age*, vol. 2, p. 279.

[8] *History of Dogma*, i, 66, note.

[9] *La Doctrine de la Sainte Cène*, Lausanne, 1889, pp. 33, 79, 80. He also thinks John 6 has no direct reference to the Lord's Supper. See *Th. Litt. Zeit*, 1891, 29ff.

B. Weiss thinks that the oldest tradition had no express command to baptize or to hold Lord's Suppers. How he knows this except by the silence of Mark, which does not prove it, and how he knows that the oldest account of all—Paul's—does not reproduce that oldest tradition, "beats" me. But he acknowledges that the apostolic practice in regard to baptism and Supper from the very start knew the intention of Jesus, and had found in both a bond of fellowship for his disciples.[12] And even the more liberal Beyschlag says bluntly that Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper is the most certain of all certain things which are handed down to us from him, and without this setting in (institution) the whole subsequent apostles' doctrine of Christ's death as Saviour is transformed into an inconceivable riddle."[13]

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[10] "*Ueber die urspringliche Form und Bedeutung der Abendmahlsworte*, Halle, 1894, esp. p. 27f.

[11] Grafe (Professor Bonn), *Die neuesten Forchungen üb. d. urchrist. Abendmahlsfeier*, in *Zeitschrift für Theol. u. Kirche*, 5th year, 1895, p. 137.

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[12] *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, 3 Aufl., pp. 99f.

[13] *Neutestamentlichen Theologie*, 1891, vol. 1, p. 155 and note. Beyschlag was N. T. professor in Halle. The eminent authority on the Apostles' Creed, Kattenbusch, professor in Giessen, of the same school of thought, agrees entirely with Beyschlag. See his review of Jülicher in *Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1894, p. 338, and his art. in *Christliche Welt*, 1895, p. 318. "It belongs," he says, "to the surest of the sure that Jesus created something permanent for the disciples," referring to the Eucharist. Seyerlen (professor in Jena) says that we can say with a certainty that allows no doubt that "Jesus in the Lord's Supper desired to create an abiding institution for his society (Gemeinde), and, indeed, in his memory and especially as a reminder of his death." *Zeitschrift für praktische Theologie*, vol. 11, 1889, p. 143. For further treatment of the question whether Christ founded the Supper, see J. Hoffmann, *Das Abendmahl in Urchristentum*, 1903, pp. 94ff; K. G. Goetz, *Die heutige Abendmahlsfrage in ihrer Geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 1907, pp. 120ff; Schaefer, *Das Herrenmahl nach Ursprung und Bedeutung*, 1897, pp. 15ff, 261ff.; Frischkopf, *Die Neuesten Erörterungen über die Abendmahlsfrage*, 1921, pp. 155ff.; and Guy, *Was Holy Communion Instituted by Jesus?* 1924 (x, 213 pages). I have carefully studied these and other authorities.

CHAPTER II

DID APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY BORROW FROM THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS?

Besides the ordinary state or local religions of antiquity, there were so-called mysteries, or mystery religions, which had wide scope, and which, it is claimed, entered into our own faith. The Eleusinian mysteries of Greece, the Dionysiac of the same, the Isiac of Egypt, the Mithras religion from Persia, penetrated into the Roman Empire, and when Christianity was spreading formed a background or atmosphere which could not be escaped. Certain characteristics were more or less common to all: (1) They recognized the fact of sin and the desire to be free from it. (2) They recognized natural forces with which we all have to do, such as the seasons, harvest, birth, life, death, and in various crude ways represented these in drama or symbol. (3) They recognized the natural bent of mankind, especially in lower stages of culture, to know secret things, and therefore had hidden services, various concealed teachings, graded initiations, and revelations given only little by little. While our present secret societies are modern, their appeal is an old one, provided for fully in various mystery religions. (4) The power of knowledge in general, not only of secrets to be revealed in initiations, had its attraction. It goes to the pride of natural man, Ye are saved of knowledge. The uninitiated, the poor outsider—what does he know, what can he do? This is one of the attractions of Christian Science, Gnosticism—the knowledge religion and the mystery cults appealed to this instinct. (5) The mysteries struck another deep note in the untutored soul of man—the love of ritual. We like to see something doing, something going on before our eyes, as the expression of our religion, something of which we are part either as witnesses or doers or both. To wrestle with God in the secret place, to meditate on him, to "sit still and know that I am God," to enter into thy closet and pray, to find profit in a meeting where nothing is "going on," nothing but the communion between yourself and the Eternal Logos—that is not popular, that is only for rare spirits. Therefore the Society of Friends is a wee folk, but the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic, and the Anglican Catholic Churches are a mighty body. The natural man likes to see spectacles; the more his religion is a moving picture, the better, and the mystery religions were the ritualistic purveyors of antiquity. Modern lodges have unconsciously taken a lesson from them. (6) They ministered to the dread of death, to the hopes of the hereafter, and fostered the ideas of retribution and reward. When you get religions which play on the fears of conscience, recollection of evil deeds in the past, and looking forward to the reckoning of the future, you have something. Some of the religions which worked on fear were superficial and empty, if we may believe Plato, when speaking of the Orphic mysteries:

> There are quacks and soothsayers who flock to the rich man's door, and try to persuade him that they have a power at command which they procure from heaven, and which enables them by sacrifices and incantations performed amid feasting and indulgence, to make amends for any crime committed by the individual himself or by his ancestors. . . . And they produce a host of books, written by Musæus and Orpheus which form their ritual. . . . Their mysteries deliver us from the torments of the other world, while the neglect of them is punished by an awful doom.[1]

However it may have been with these Orphic priests whom Plato calls quacks, it is undeniable that the mysteries ministered to a genuine attitude of the soul toward the future life, either of fear or hope.

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[1] *Republic*, 364, the Davies and Vaughan trans., p. 47 (bk. 2).

Dr. Percy Gardner explains the attractions of the mystery cults in this way:

> The great need and longing of the time was for salvation. Men and women were eager for such a communion with the Divine, such a relation of the interest of God (the gods) in their affairs as might serve to support them in the trials of life, and guarantee to them a friendly reception in the world beyond the grave. To obtain peace of mind, a position of confident hope amid the blows of circumstance, they would make trial of any secret cult which came their way, perhaps of one after another, until they found one to satisfy their needs.[2]

On the other hand, there were certain limitations or defects in the mystery religions which it is fair to mention.

1. They made few, if any, moral demands. At Eleusis the homicide was rejected and the man mixed up in unhallowed rites; otherwise while respectable people were welcome, no positive moral conditions were imposed as in Christianity. The candidates were not redeemed from sinful ways. The mysteries give only impressions, said Aristotle (or, to quote his words, "The initiated are not to learn anything but experience in themselves, and be brought to a sentiment or feeling, as far as they are capable."[3]

2. They had no large, rich doctrinal content, as Christianity has. The Orpheus and Hermes cults had something of this kind, but the definite teaching function of the mystery religions was small.

3. They were spectacular. As some modern secret orders enact over again—or try to do so—scenes from the Bible or elsewhere, so the mystery cults represented in a rough way the legends of the gods and goddesses

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[2] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. ix, p. 81.

[3] A sentence not in his extant works, but quoted by Synesius, *Dio*, according to De Jong, *Das Antike Mysterienwesen*, p. 87.

which they favored. By darkness and light, shadows and sudden illumination, and by various initiations, they, like modern orders, made a deep impression. "I have transcended," says Apuleius (second century A. D., who was initiated into various mystery cults, and who is now speaking of that of Isis)—"I have transcended the boundaries of death, I have trodden the threshold of Proserpine, and having traversed all elements, I am returned to the earth. In the middle of the night I have seen the sun scintillating with a pure light; I have approached the gods below and the gods above, and have worshiped face to face."[4] There were skilled adaptations of darkness and light, and dramatic imitations of the gods and their histories.

4. According to the cultured and widely read Clement of Alexandria, who as a philosophical Christian was open to everything worthy in heathenism and would not therefore be likely to exaggerate its evil tendencies, the mystery initiations were none too dignified, moral, or chaste:

> The lewd orgies of Aphrodite, . . . the parents of impious fables and deadly superstition who sowed in human life that seed of evil and ruin—the mysteries. Their orgies full of imposture and quackery. . . . I publish without reserve what has been involved in secrecy, not ashamed to tell what you are not ashamed to worship. There is, then, the foam-born and Cyprus-born darling of Cinyras, Aphrodite. . . . Of so lewd a fruit, Aphrodite is born. In the rites which celebrate this enjoyment [of the nuptial act between Uranus and the sea], as a symbol of her birth a lump of salt and the phallus are handed to those who are initiated into the act of uncleanness. And those initiated bring a piece of money to her, as a courtesan's paramours do to her.
>
> Then there are the mysteries of Dementer (Ceres) and Zeus' wanton embraces of his mother and the wrath of Demeter . . . and the deeds which we dare not name. . . . The symbol of initiation into these rites will excite your laughter. "I have eaten out of the drum (says the initiated), I have drunk out of the cymbals, I have carried the cernes [vessel containing poppy, or

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[4] *Metamorphoses* 11. 23.

a fan], I have slipped into the bedroom." Are not these tokens of disgrace? . . . Demeter becomes a mother (by Zeus). (The daughter) Cora (Pherephatta, or Persephone or Proserpine or Cora) is reared up to womanhood. In course of time he who begat her, this same Zeus, has intercourse with his own daughter Pherephatta (Cora or Proserpine), forgetting his former abominable wickedness. Zeus is both the father and seducer of Cora. [The point is that the mysteries celebrate so many immoralities that they are themselves immoral.] . . . The mysteries of Dionysus are wholly inhuman:

Clement goes on to give more of the story on which the mystery is founded, and says that Demeter went forth to search for her daughter Cora or Prosperpine, who had been snatched away by Pluto, reaches Eleusis, is entertained by the woman Baubo, who to please her and to get her to drink a cup of refreshment shows her own naked body; and Clement quotes the actual words of Orpheus used in the imitation services of the mystery, apparently with appropriate dramatic accompaniments:

Having thus spoken, she drew aside her garments,
And showed all that shape of the body which is improper to name,
With her own hand Baubo stripped herself under her breasts.
Blandly then the goddess laughed and laughed in her mind,
And received the glancing cup in which was the draught.

And the following is the token of the Eleusinian mysteries (words repeated): "I have fasted, I have drunk the cup, I have received [the phallus] from the box; having done I have put it into the basket, and out of the basket into the chest." Fine sights truly and becoming a goddess, mysteries worthy of the night and flame. . . . And in truth against these Heraclitus the Ephesian prophesies as the "nightwalkers, the magi, the bacchanals, the Lemnæan revelers, the initiated." These he threatens with what will follow death, and predicts for them fire.[5]

5. The mysteries were naturalistic, not representing

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[5] *Protrep.* 2 (*Exhortation to Heathen*, A. N. F., vol. ii, pp. 5–7. Certain parts are omitted, though necessary to full understanding of the mysteries. Look these up in the source referred to.

moral or spiritual truths, but those of nature or of natural (or unnatural) deeds of gods. They set forth seedtime, spring, summer, harvest, or the acts of gods supposed to symbolize these forces or seasons. They also represented procreation, birth, growth, fertility. Of course other functions were assigned to the mystery gods like Dionysus, Osiris, and others; but the "significant fact remains that in the mystery religions, as a class, a naturalistic basis was prominent."[6]

6. The mystery religions were magical, and dealt in magic. (By magic I mean the producing of wonderful or preternatural or supernatural effects by ritualistic rites or so-called sacred means, not by rational, ethical, or spiritual means, and the effects also not being ethical or spiritual.) For one thing it was thought that their dramatic imitation of nature or of the lives of the gods would "revive and strengthen the failing energies of nature, so that trees should bear fruit, wheat ripen, and men and animals reproduce their kind." Then Babylonian and Egyptian religions were magical, and these influenced the mysteries, or were themselves the mysteries. The mystery religions filled the Roman Empire with wandering professional magicians, quacks, and soothsayers. While all heathen religions were magical, old pagan Rome had a healthy disgust for the traveling priests; but with the coming in and advance of these Oriental cults the professional magicians who dogged the steps of the apostles and missionaries came into high favor. As a sign of magic, note the rule of the Eleusinian mysteries, taken over also by others and by all the Gnostic sects, that the formulæ and initiation rituals should be learned exactly and even pronounced correctly, or these formulæ, etc., might lose all their effectiveness for the initiate.

7. Professor Henry C. Sheldon does well to call atten-

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[6] Sheldon, *Mystery Religions and the New Testament*, p. 29, 1918.

tion to the star mysticism of these Oriental cults. When a soul comes from heaven to earth it takes on the powers, etc., of the stars or planets through which it journeys, till it finally takes a body here. After death there is a "reverse movement," the soul laying aside its bodily encumbrances, limitations, and sins little by little as it ascends through the planets and stars to its original home in the light eternal. It had to go by the way of the heavenly bodies, and unless it knew the exact formulæ or passwords necessary to pass through each planet (compare modern lodges) it could not get through, but was detained there to suffer. Mithraism, perhaps the most popular mystery religion in the third century and a potent rival to Christianity, had this planet theurgy worked out in fine style. There were seven spheres in the heavens to go through, each represented by its planet. Each sphere or planet was guarded by an angel, or Ormuzd. Only the initiates who knew the appropriate formulæ or passwords could "appease the inexorable guardians." As the soul passed these different zones it rid itself of the "passions and faculties it had received in its descent to the earth. It abandoned to the moon its vital and nutritive energy, to Mercury its desires, to Venus its wicked appetites, to the sun its intellectual capacities, to Mars its love of war, to Jupiter its ambitious dreams, to Saturn its inclinations. It was naked, stripped of every vice and sensibility, when it penetrated the eighth heaven to enjoy there as an essence supreme and in the eternal light that bathed the gods, beatitude without end."[7] As I said, to be admitted into and pass through these seven heavenly star-spheres, the necessary passwords, learned only from the priests of the mystical cults, must be given. Like Roman Catholic priests and the officers of secret orders to-day, priests or hierophants of the mystery religions held the keys of the kingdom of light. The common folk outside knew where to apply.

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[7] Cumont, *Mysteries of Mithra*, pp. 144, 145. The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago.

8. The doctrine of God in the mystery cults was a variable one. While they all kept up the mythological polytheisms of popular heathenism, some of them had tendencies to consider the gods as vague cosmical powers, which is next door to pantheism. In others pantheism and dualism (two supreme beings, Ormuzd and Ahriman, Light and Darkness, etc.) were mixed. Hermes seems to be pantheist in making God equal to all things. There was a pantheistic strain also in the Egyptian religions of Isis and Serapis. But no ancient faith outside of Judaism and Christianity had a consistent and worthy doctrine of the One God.

9. A syncretistic (unionistic) tendency marked not only the so-called mystery religions, but nearly all faiths in the first centuries of Christianity. The Emperor Alexander Severus (222-235) put up in his palace altars or statues to the heroes of all religions, Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius of Tyana, Christ. From Aurelian (270-275) to Constantine (306-337) the Sol Invictus (the unconquerable sun) became a kind of general emperor god. Whether Mithras, Attis, Jupiter, they were all only names of an Unconquerable One. This tendency found its best literary expression in the Emperor Julian's address upon Helios and the Mother of the gods. The cult of this mother (compare the Mary-worship in the Roman Church) and of immortality-promising Attis was widespread in the dying centuries of heathenism. The god of healing, Asclepius, came in for veneration in the fourth and fifth centuries. So with place gods and house gods. They tried to identify Mithra with Helios, Isis with Demeter, Osiris with Dionysus. This smelting process was seen in the priests of one cult functioning in the temples of another.

10. The mystery faiths were alike in the slight honor

they gave to women. Of course they celebrated the stories of certain goddesses in their ceremonies, but as these were sometimes the victims of the lust of Jupiter or Zeus, the honor of women was not greatly advanced. Moreover, the benefit of the initiations depended on male priests who alone knew the secrets of the Way, as in the Catholic Church of all schools. Still the mystery religions did not go as far, I think, as Mithra in excluding women from everything of value. "Among the hundreds of inscriptions that have come down to us not one mentions a priestess, a woman initiate, or even a donatress."[8]

11. A word further in regard to Mithraism. This Oriental faith penetrated into the territory of Christianity in the second, third, and fourth centuries, and was a formidable rival. Its bearers were the Eastern soldiers of the empire, such as those on the Danube and the Rhine, colonists, and in Dacia and Pannonia merchants traveling from the East, and numerous slaves from the same. Where Greeks and Christians had a firm foothold, it did little; but in mixed semibarbarous populations it had a fascination, as shown by its astrology or planet-witchery, magic, dream interpretation, amulets. Where it came across the morally dissatisfied, disgusted with the corruption of the world, it knew how to satisfy them by the strivings for purity of which it talked, strife against the sensuous, elevation above the common needs. To those who had fallen it spoke of redemption, freeing from uncleanness, and living on in some blessed state hereafter. Then to those who wanted striking ceremonies it offered the cleansing blood-bath of the Taurobolium and union with the god in the consecrated bread and wine of its cult meal. No wonder it was the most dangerous rival of Christianity. Why did it finally fail? Because it remained essentially a religion of barbarians: it could

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[8] Cumont, *Mithra*, p. 173. Reprinted by permission of The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago.

not effect a union with Hellenistic culture, a union which gave Christianity strong and fast-standing ground. The Emperor Julian played with it, the Roman aristocracy put their gold at its command, but this gave it no permanent hold.[9]

We know little about these mystery religions. We have no treatise on them from antiquity, no description, no liturgy. Dieterich published a liturgy in 1903 which he thought was a Mithras liturgy and sent it forth under that name; but Cumont, who knows as much about Mithras as any man living, thinks it is not a Mithras liturgy at all. All experts agree that our knowledge is scanty, and a good deal of what we say is guess or hypothesis. I have followed the usual authorities and now ask, Did these religions influence Christianity?

So far as we know Christianity of the apostolic age and of the age immediately after, we can impute but little to this influence. Christianity did not get the thought of sin from this source, nor her method of dealing with it by repentance and faith in Christ. She did not represent the seasons, nor the natural events of life, nor any mythology of the gods by services or initiations. She held services indeed on Sunday in honor of the bodily resurrection of her Lord on that day, but this was entirely due to that, without the slightest tinge of pagan influence. She had no secret meetings nor initiations, except that in times of persecutions the meetings were more or less concealed; but even then any pagan could attend who was well disposed. There was not the slightest trace of the church being a secret order, or surrounding itself with the fascination of graded initiations. Nor did she play on the pride of knowledge in general, as did Gnosticism and some of the mysteries. Her first disciples were plain men not scholastically trained, and she welcomed everybody to her ranks and not simply philosophers and the learned. Nor did Christianity deal in ritual or spectacular display, thus being far removed from the mystery religions. In apostolic times we have a full description of the services in Corinth, and they remind you of a modern prayer meeting or an old-fashioned Methodist class meeting. We have Justin Martyr's account of the worship both general and eucharistic, 140-150 A. D.; which was simple and far removed from the later Catholic ceremonial.[10] But what about the fear of death? Here again there was nothing magical, nothing ceremonial, no extreme unction (which came in the eleventh century), no initiation into the dark caverns of Eleusis, no coffin ritual as in some lodges; but everything was rational, spiritual, a new faith, a new hope, a new life. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith; he that believeth on the Son hath the life and shall never see death. The Christian's banner was: This is the victory that overcometh death, even your faith.

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[9] See Preuschen in Krüger, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, i, 97, sec. 17, 3. 1911.

If we take the list of defects of the mystery religions, we shall get more light as to alleged apostolic borrowings. Far from having a few moral demands, Christianity began by laying down the strictest moral program ever known, and repeated it in the numerous counsels of the apostles. And Christianity had its own way of securing this, not by sensuous impressions, but by renewal of the soul and life through faith in Christ. The rich religious or doctrinal content of Christianity differs much from the meager teachings of Mithra and other mysteries. And this doctrinal content was its own or was taken over from the Old Testament revelation. I gave Clement's description of the mystery initiations. What an infinite remove from Christianity! Nor was the latter a nature religion. It did not celebrate the seasons, not even the coming of spring, nor did it have a ritual of birth or of coming of age, and though it blessed marriage and took the sting from death it had no initiations for these or strange services. Christianity, in other words, was moral and spiritual, not an earth cult or nature faith.

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[10] See my analysis in *Crises in the Early Church*, 1912, pp. 153–55.

Christianity separated itself from all ancient religions by not being magical, no *deus ex machina,* no *ex opere operato,* no repeat-formulæ-and-it-is-done, no turn-common-things-into-sacred-by-an-incantation, no priestly sleight-of-hand, but everything came from the three fundamental spiritual vitalities, faith, hope, love; these three; but the greatest of these is—well, for the sinner, or the seeking saint, faith; for the despairing and downcast, hope; and for the believing and hoping Christian for whom Paul was writing, love. But, you say, baptism was magical in apostolic times ("Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins"). But to whom was the apostle speaking? To those already convicted, partially believing, on the way to salvation, who only needed the public confession in baptism to seal and crown a conversion already in essence accomplished. Besides, the Orientals did not distinguish between symbol and reality; or, in other words, the reality became the possessor's when the symbol was also his, just as with us the land or house is ours, not when we have bought it and paid for it, but when the symbol is passed to us, the deed. In apostolic times baptism did not effect a change by magic, but was a public sealing of a change already begun, a symbolic burial of a person whose old man had already been submerged by the cleansing waters of faith. As to the Lord's Supper I shall speak in a moment.

In regard to the fantastic planet mythology of the mystery religions—the soul in its descent getting, and in its ascent shuffling off, its earthly elements—here also what a different world we are in! As to the password test we say with Puck, "Lord, what fools these mortals be!"

Nor did the idea of God in Christianity have anything in common with the mystery cults. I said that in the latter the idea of God was mythological, or it was dualistic, or it was pantheistic, or it was all three. But with Christianity God was the Father Almighty—loving, righteous, true, Father, first of the Eternal Son, then by creation and redemption of mankind, and especially of those who love and serve him. That was their theism, and it has remained the same till now.

Nor was there anything syncretistic in Christianity in this first age. It could not run God and Jupiter together, nor blend Jesus with Orpheus, nor kaleidoscope the Holy Spirit with the mother of the gods. No Christian for many centuries could have uttered Pope's Universal Prayer:

"Father of all! in every age,
  In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
  Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!
Thou Great First Cause, least understood,
  Who all my sense confined
To know but this, that thou art good,
  And that myself am blind."

His God was as real to him as your father and mother are to you, nor could he swap gods, as the pagans could, nor let him fade into Attis. The Christian idea of God was sharp, decisive, imperative, engrossing. It possessed his whole soul, it admitted no doubt or half-belief—to-morrow it would hail him before the proconsul, the next day send him to the dungeon, and the day after to the lions or to the executioner. Oh, no, there was nothing unionistic with paganism in early Christianity.

Christianity was quite unlike the mystery faiths in its high honor of women. While it did not interfere with natural distinctions of sex, race, talent, adaptation, and chose its leaders and responsible officers from men, it opened to all alike its spiritual goods and gifts, had women as prophetesses, deaconesses, and in private circles teachers, and emancipated them in every essential regard. Infidel writers have claimed that Christianity kept women back, and it is true that it did not advance them to be public official teachers; but if you will read scholarly books like Brace's *Gesta Christi* or Schmidt's *Social Results of Early Christianity,* you will see what immense debt in the long evolution women owe to Christianity. Compare with the hetairai of ancient Athens.

So much for the general features of Christianity and the mystery religions and their fundamental differences. Let us look at baptism and the Lord's Supper.

I think there can be no doubt that the custom in Corinth of baptizing the living for the benefit of the dead was suggested by heathen usage. No church was surrounded by a more penetrating heathenism than that in Corinth. Heathen societies, unions, fraternities, Oriental cults, honeycombed the whole town, and scholars have shown that various echoes of these are in Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians. How far the organization of the church there was suggested by the fraternities is still a disputed question, but more or less influence is to be expected. There was absolutely nothing in Christianity to suggest proxy baptism, and Plato's remark that priests offered sacrifices for the dead,[11] the initiation orgies of Dionysus which were taken by a representative of the dead for the latter, and the emphasis of the mysteries on immortality ("baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not"), make it likely that some of the Christians in Corinth had taken over the custom from their former environment. Paul neither condemns nor praises it, but uses it as an argument *ex concessu* for the resurrection of the dead. But if that custom in Corinth was taken over from pagan religions, it was the only item in connection with baptism which was taken over. The antecedents of baptism were Jewish.

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[11] *Republic*, ii, 364bff.

As to the Lord's Supper, it is said that Paul had what the Germans call the sacramental view of it (as opposed to the memorial); that is, that the bread and wine are actually changed into the body and blood of Christ, that we really eat that body and drink that blood, and that the strength and blessing of the Son of God thus eaten go into us, just as the heathen thought that in eating the flesh of animals dedicated to their gods in their idol feasts they ate in a real sense the god himself, and that the strength and virtue of the gods went into them. It is held that Paul got these ideas from the mystery faiths. Well, there is no doubt whatever that if he had these ideas, he got them from heathen sources, for nothing could be less Christian than such conceptions.

Paul refers to the Lord's Supper only twice in his Epistles, namely, in 1 Cor. 10 and 11. In 1 Cor. 10. 16-22 he is arguing against the Christians going into the heathen sacred feasts on the ground that they have meals of their own where "the cup of blessing which we bless is a communion (κοινωνία, not a partaking, much less a drinking, but a communion or fellowship) with the blood of Christ, and the loaf which we break is a communion κοινωνία) with the body of Christ" (verse 16); that is, the Lord's Supper brings Christians into spiritual fellowship with Christ's body and blood, with the blessings which that body and blood have brought to them; therefore they have no occasion to go to heathen feasts. He then goes on to ask whether a thing sacrificed to idols is anything or an idol anything, and suggests the opinion that heathens sacrifice to demons, not to God. If that is so, as you think, you cannot in the nature of the case "drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, partake of (μετέχειν, become a part of, associate with) the table of the Lord and the table of demons" (verse 21). Here there is nothing whatever said of the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood, much less of an eating of that body and blood, but of a (spiritual) communion with the body and of the resulting ethical and religious consecration which should separate them from immoral heathen feasts. Lietzmann says[12] that he who has learned to think according to the history-of-religions way will hold here, as in the case of baptism, a pressing in of Hellenistic mysticism into Gentile Christianity as probable. Well, he may; but if he does, he will do it without ground. He should interpret Paul from what Paul says rather than from the presuppositions of the interpreter's school.

In 1 Cor. 11. 20-34 we have a picture of the ordinary Eucharistic meals in the Greek cities, but with this difference: that in the other churches, so far as we know, moderation and brotherhood were observed, while here the members scrambled selfishly each for his own eatables, leaving those who on account of poverty brought nothing or very little with them, to go away hungry, perhaps embittered and angry. Paul corrects this in five ways: (1) He gives an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, and brings out the fact that the bread is the body of Christ and the wine the blood (where the "is" is to be interpreted by the context, that is, sacramentally), and therefore sacred, and not to be consumed as in a drunken feast. (2) The bread and wine bring before them the body "which is for you"; that is, the offering of which brought your salvation, and the cup is the "new covenant in my blood," and therefore thrice sacred as having to do with my atoning work, and all the more is to be guarded from thoughtless gormandizing and drunkenness. (3) The whole service or sacrament is "for my remembrance," and therefore must not be perverted to base appetites. (4) It also "publishes abroad the death of the Lord until he comes," which is another reason for not copying unrestrained heathen indulgences. (5) He, therefore, who forgets these facts and turns the Supper into a drunken feast is guilty of profanation of the body and blood of the Lord. You must, then, discriminate the body, and not come together to a Lord's Supper as to one of your heathen feasts.

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[12] *Briefe des Ap. Paulus an die Korinther*, I, p. 125.

Reitzenstein lists about one hundred and fifty words,[13] many of them from the New Testament, which he discusses and on which he builds up his claim that Paul borrowed from the mystery faiths. But that does not follow unless you can show that these words had the same content to the pagan as to Paul, so that Paul not only used the same words, but the same ideas. The Christian did not live up in the air. He had to use the same words that everybody used. That very necessity was part of the divine preparation of Christianity. The materialistic evolutionist uses the same terms as the theist—he speaks of the "purpose" of nature, the "aim" of creation, the "goal" of this or that species, and yet he has no belief whatever in teleology. Not your words, O Paul, but the meaning you put into them is that which matters, and you have left us in no doubt of that. It is very likely that De Jong expresses a truer judgment when he says that as to words and view there is in the New Testament much in the way of analogy to the mystery religions, but that an intentional borrowing by the Christians is not to be thought of, and that as to ethics and eschatology Christianity was exceptional among ancient religions.[14]

Finally, did or did not Paul borrow his Lord's Supper ideas from this source?

(1) He did not deny such source in so many words, but he really denied it. Not from Gentile cults, but "I

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[13] *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, pp. 218–220. 1910.

[14] *Das Antike Mysterienwesen*, 2 Aufl., 1919, p. 432.

have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you" (1 Cor. 11. 23). Whether directly by revelation or indirectly by instruction or tradition, he cuts out foisting mystery sacraments on the church. Arthur Drews makes the whole Supper account in 1 Cor. 11. an interpolation;[15] but if you proceed in this way, you can make the New Testament prove anything or nothing.

(2) The mystery religions made their meals essential to salvation, whereas Paul made them a means of grace, a proclamation of Christ and his work, a remembrance, and made God's election and man's faith the determining elements of salvation. The usual meaning of sacramental as automatically mediating salvation (where no essential barrier is presented), the life and virtue of the gods or of God, is foreign to Paul and the entire New Testament. With them union with Christ by faith and love and hope is determining, while in the mystery religions the sacramental, the *ex opere operato* magic, is the chief thing. We cannot even say with Professor Groton[16] that Paul regarded the bread and wine as "active mystical agencies." At least we have no evidence of it. How could bread be a mystical agent except by magic? whereas by appealing to imagination and memory it could be a moral agent.

(3) Both Christ and Paul bring the Supper into their eschatology: "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until," etc., "Ye do show the Lord's death till he come." There was no eschatological significance like this in the cults.

(4) So far as sacraments bring a blessing, according to Paul they do so immediately in response to faith or confession, while in the mysteries they are parts of a ritual reached only by stages.

(5) In these religions efficacy of the rites depends on

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[15] *Die Christusmythe*, p. 128.

[16] *Eucharist and Pagan Cults*, 1914, p. 142.

the word-for-word—perhaps right intonation too—recitation of the ritual, while in the New Testament there is no ritual of the Supper at all. In fact, there is no trace of a prescribed ritual in the second century, though by the third century repetition would naturally lead to a more or less uniform method.

(6) Carl Clemen points out that though originally in pagan religions men were thought of as partaking of the deity in the meal, it is not certain that that idea continued into early Christian times. We cannot say that the Christians believed that they were eating and drinking the flesh and blood of Christ. In the liturgy which Dieterich thinks is Mithraic (but Cumont does not) the god is implored, "Remain with me in my soul"; in a London papyrus there is the prayer, "Come to me, Lord Hermes, as unborn babies into the bellies of the women"; in the Berlin magical papyrus in the "sacred receiving at the sitting" (at table) there is nothing of this. The mystes has to prepare a couch, and in front of it is set a table with wine and "lifeless eatables"; then he lays himself down to await the god. If the god comes, the instructions are, "You draw him down by the hand and let him recline (at table) as said before." What is said before is, "And place yourself for the use of the food of the feast and of what is put beside (for the god?), and converse with him face to face." (These papyri are quoted in Greek.) Here the god is supposed to appear at the feasts, but he is not united to the initiated by means of eating. There is no evidence that this last belief existed at all in later times, still less that men partook of the god.[17]

So far as apostolic Christianity, therefore, is concerned, evidence for influence from mystery cults fails. Nor psychologically was there any chance for it. Outside of

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[17] Clemen, *Primitive Christianity*, etc., transl. 1912, pp. 259, 260. J. Hoffmann, *Abendmahl*, p. 247, agrees (1903).

Christ himself, whence did Christianity spring? From Judaism. Though Paul had Hellenistic culture, he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. If baptism and the Lord's Supper needed any historical presuppositions, they had them abundantly in Judaism. Christianity from the third century on is another story, but for its first-century phase there is not only historically no evidence of any influence from the mystery religion on doctrine and cultus (except possibly baptism for the dead at Corinth), but psychologically and spiritually that influence is excluded.

And this entirely outside of general facts, which have an equally—perhaps more—cogent bearing. (1) The apostles and apostolic men who wrote the New Testament were not men learned in heathen religions. They had never studied them, they had no scientific interest in them, they had no care for them. (2) All these writers were Jews, and Judaism is a faith so engrossing and exclusive even for those born outside Palestine that it gives no chance for the catholic spirit of the dilettante who looks abroad and wonders what nice things he can pick out from other fields. Besides, so far as the apostles were in sympathy with any one side of Jewish religion it was with the strict side, not with Sadducee nor with Essene. It is true that contemporary with Christ there was a cultured Jew living in Alexandria in north Egypt who was influenced by Plato in allegorizing parts of the Old Testament, but we have no evidence that the apostles ever heard of him. In any case this writer, Philo, was a strong Jew, not a heathen, though a wide-viewing and cultured man. (3) Paul was a Jew with an overmastering attachment to his religion, and there was no chance for pagan ideas to slip in to modify what he got from that religion or from the Spirit of Christ. Indeed, there were no men in the world who would be less likely than the apostolic circle to lug in anything from foreign sources. You could more easily think of Jefferson tempering his patriotism from the state papers of Lord North and transforming his famous utterance into a Declaration of Dependence. (4) The chief of these mystery religions, that of Mithra, to which most influence has been attributed, did not come into the territory of Christianity till the second or third century—too late for the purpose of this chapter.

CHAPTER III

DID THE ANCIENT CHURCH BORROW FROM THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS?

It has been shown that apostolic Christianity did not borrow anything of importance from the mystery religions. When we come into the third, fourth, and following centuries we are in a different world. This is seen in that interesting section of church history called *Disciplina Arcani* (literally, the instruction of the secret, that is, "Initiation into Secret Knowledge"). Coming into the church was thought of as dedication or initiation into mysteries, of which baptism and the Lord's Supper were the kernel, and baptismal confession and the Lord's Prayer were elements. The Roman Church has claimed that it is not necessary to prove that all the Roman doctrines existed in the early church, because some of them flowed on from the first century in the underground river of secret tradition or teaching. Transubstantiation, worship of saints, etc., are not to be expected in early Christian literature because they were communicated only to the perfect or initiated as part of a hidden process of instruction. Such was the claim.[1] Against this is the fact that for two hundred years the greatest openness existed as to doctrine and sacraments. Justin, about 150, gives a full account of baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the nature of the case the unbaptized were not admitted to the Supper (*Did. 9*), but that was because the latter was Christian, not because it was secret. Of course in times of persecution there was more or less secrecy as to worship and Supper, but this was entirely for the sake of safety. Then the first stages of the secret instruction (say about 200 on) related to cultus or sacrament, not to doctrine. When Paul speaks of milk for babes and meat for full-grown, he has reference entirely to the pedagogical principle of giving the simpler lessons in religion or in anything else to the raw and untrained first, not to any custom of graded initiation or learning.

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[1] **Even in our times, by Wandinger, in *Kirchenlexikon*, 2 Aufl., 1882, 1, 1236ff.**

As to the cause or origin of this secret instruction in the church, Protestants were not agreed. Casaubon, who was the first to discuss it in 1654, emphasized heathen mysteries and the pedagogical impulse to follow them. Fromann, in 1833, brought in Jewish practice with proselytes along with heathen influence, including the Alexandrian secret Gnosis, though the learned church historian Mosheim had as far back as 1754 insisted on a distinction between church and Gnosis as to this. Rothe, in 1841, thought the practice could be explained by the ordinary necessities of the catechumenate in the church, the growing emphasis on doctrine, which had as consequence the general admission of catechumens to the services. The acute critic Credner, in 1844, saw the origin of the custom in the growing reverence for the Supper, investing it with awful sanctity, first theologically and then as a mystery, which necessitated finally the division of the service into two sections, the introductory section, where such commonplace things as reading the Word of God, singing and chanting his praises, preaching, should take place, and the main section, where the tremendous mystery of the Supper was to be celebrated. To the first section ordinary Christians and outsiders could be admitted, to the second only those adequately instructed and initiated. The eminent theologian Theodore Harnack (father of Adolf), in his book on the history of Christian worship (1854)—still standard—thought the matter could be explained even more naturally by what actually took place—the systematic transformation of public worship into a form or cult of mysteries, helped along by the ever-increasing legal and hierarchical spirit of the church. This was the line taken by Bonwetsch in his elaborate essay of 1873. Here he showed that the ideas and forms of mystery cults came into the church in the exact measure in which the church organized herself hierarchally and found the secret of her power in the mystic-theurgic action of her priests.[2] Van Zezschwitz, the expert in history of catechetics, brought in the influence of persecution in the second century as explaining the disposition to close the worship to the heathen and to keep silence as to some of the doctrines. And those who felt it prudent to maintain a reserve as to this last were the very ones who had the instruction of the catechumens, therefore had to do most with uncovering little by little the Christian "secrets" or mysteries. After persecution ceased, the lower class of catechumens (the hearers, *auditores*) would naturally be urged to attend the preaching, where they would hear moral instructions and common doctrines; but the higher Christian "secrets" became not only reserved for the mature (*competentes,* the qualified), but the part of the worship specifically "holy" was entirely closed to the uninitiated. Instructions concerning this part of worship or doctrine would be avoided in the addresses and sermons of the first part, and given only to the competentes on the eve of their "first communion." So the Instruction of the Secret went side by side with the catechumenate and dissolved or stopped with the latter.

My own feeling is that various factors contributed to this singular development: (1) Jewish proselyte instruction. (2) Pagan persecution, which in the second and third centuries compelled the church at times to meet in secret, fight shy of too frank disclosure of doctrines liable to misunderstanding, like the Supper (eating bread—

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[2] See this very important essay in *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie,* 1873, pp. 203ff.

Body—of Christ), justification by faith, etc. When once these more or less secret meetings and these reservations as to teaching were necessitated—or appeared to be—by persecution, the impulse thus given would naturally not die out when the immediate occasion passed. (3) Gnostic influences from Alexandria. (4) Catechumenate instruction. This played in naturally with the pagan conception of classes or grades of members, with some secret privilege attached to the higher grade, to which only the priest could admit. This led in time to the barring of the advanced mysteries to the lower ranges of members. (5) The growing theology of the Supper, setting it apart as the sacred mystery of Christianity. (6) The church becoming ever more legal, external, hierarchical, with the consequent reservation for priests of the awful mysteries of faith and worship. (7) Connected with this was the ever-present influence of the mystery religions—of course not always conscious—in making Christianity more and more a thing of magic, of knowledge through initiations, of illumination through acted mysteries, ministrants of which were the technically "holy" priests, who only could "celebrate" these technically "holy" mysteries of baptism and Supper ("holy communion," *par excellence*). The original conception of the sacraments as instituted symbols of spiritual realities—baptism of regeneration through the Spirit, Supper of communion with the ascended Christ through the same Spirit—was changed into the conception of them as mysteries—that is, secret powers and truths acted out with appropriate splendor and suggestions of wonder-working effects, with the use of magical formulæ, and which bring as by conduits divine grace and knowledge to the soul. Bonwetsch says well that the same view as in the mystery religions, the view which awaits a union with God (or the gods) either through deification in future immortality or mediated through dedication or consecration acts, leads by consecration acts to a furnishing with a divine substance or nature of this superintending hierarchy, essentially distinguished from the laity; this view leads as well to a transformation of the worship of God from symbol and symbolical acts to celebration of mysteries which inclose the divine really in themselves; and finally the same view leads from a pedagogy which has reference to a living faith to a mystagogy conducting to a mystical oneness with God.[3] That conception, borrowed from the mystery religions, of sacraments as acted by priests really inclosing the divine, and thus automatically mediating to the participant (who presents no mortal barrier) divine forgiveness and power—that conception has come from ancient times (say the fourth century) to the present in all so-called Catholic churches. In these the mystery religions still function to-day before our very eyes and the fourth century arises from the dead in the twentieth.

I agree with this scholar also that Anrich (whose book[4] is sober and in the main reliable) is right when he treats the Instruction of the Secret as a piece of the heathenizing of the church. It thus shows a striking analogy in the Catholic Church with that Gnostic system of effective dedications or consecrations, and is in line with the theology of Clement of Alexandria and Origen, influenced—with or without intentional accommodation—by the pagan mysteries. Also in the Catholic Church the view won the upper hand that communion with God, as it is conditioned by acknowledgment of church dogma, is also mediated by a complex of mysteries in which that dogma finds its stamp.

Experts do not agree as to the time when this treatment of Christian rites and beliefs as secret first began, some setting it as early as 190 or 200, others in the third century, even in the second half of the third. When

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[3] *Realencyk, f. prot. Theol. u. Kirche*, 3 Aufl., vol. 2, p. 53.

[4] *Das antike Mysterienwesen in seinem Einfluss auf das Christentum*, 1894.

Irenæus (about 185) asks for only an oral handing down of the baptismal confession,[5] he is not thinking at all of protecting it from the profane or from the uninitiated (as pledge of not writing the secret work of modern lodges) but only of glorifying it by the memory, its possessors having it on tablets of the soul. And when Tertullian (197) speaks of the "faith of silence which is in form owed to all mysteries,"[6] he does not mean that Christianity is a mystery on which we must keep silence, but he is speaking from the standpoint of the heathen. You charge us with infamous doings in our assemblies, and then you blame us for not parading our services before you to arouse your persecution. Why, even your pagan mysteries are not to be talked of. Anrich (p. 110) makes the excellent point that the first Christians took a sharply negative attitude toward the whole heathen religion—not so Gnosticism, which consciously strove to unite Christianity and ancient religion and cultus—and that therefore it would take a long time for heathen influence to work into concrete formation. Tertullian himself gives much information on Christian services, sacraments, doctrines, just as Hippolytus speaks of baptism, with no obligation of silence (first half of third century). Origen (middle of third century) speaks of keeping mum about what we know, but that may not refer to our subject, nor can we tell how far what he says reflects his own views and how far the general church consciousness and speech.

However, it was in the third century and in the fourth and fifth that we find the Instruction of the Secret and the mystery terminology in full swing. As the masses still semiheathen streamed into the church, it was pedagogically wise to keep some things back. In addresses and sermons we hear of "those keeping silence know,"

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[5] *Adv. Haer.*, 3. 4, 1, 2.

[6] *Apol.*, 7.

"the initiated," etc. Chrysostom[7] says: "And the initiated know it [the spiritual meaning of the water and blood from Christ's side] being by water indeed regenerated and nourished by the Blood and Flesh. Hence the mysteries take their beginning."[8] Mystery words went into church use. Baptism and preparatory instruction to it are called "initiation." "To be initiated" and "to be taught the elements" of religion are used interchangeably; "to seal" means the sign of the cross used in baptism as well as baptism itself, and "seal" means not only baptism, as before, but now the "seal of secret perfection" ("secret" referring to one initiated in the mysteries), also "mystical (or secret) cleansing and purification"; Lord's Supper is "celebration of mysteries," "the holy celebration of mysteries," "the mystical celebration of the mysteries," "the most awful mystery celebration," and similar phrases. Chrysostom speaks of a "mixed cup of the mystical initiation," the Supper as the "holy mystical initiation," and the "mystical gifts." The word *επόπτης* is used, one initiated into the highest grade of the mysteries, *σύμβολα* (signs) of the elements of the Eucharist, and "holy chamber" the part of the church building which women could not enter.

It is instructive to notice that it was not doctrine and sacramental gifts in themselves which were under the awe of the Secret, but the elements of the sacrament and ritual celebration—an evidence of their connections with the mysteries as well as against the derivation of this church phenomenon simply from the catechumenate. In one of Theodoret's Dialogues the orthodox is asked what he calls the gifts which are brought there before the epiclesis (calling upon the Holy Spirit to bless worshipers and gifts) of the priest. He replies, "It is not necessary to speak wisely; for it is likely that some uninitiated are present," and ventures to call the gifts only "the food from such-like seeds." Over against that the opponent remarks simply: "The symbols of the body and blood of the Master," and "The mystical symbol [the symbol used in the sacred initiation of the Eucharist] changes the former appellation; for it is no longer named that which it was first called, but it is named body."

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[7] Active, 380ff.

[8] *Hom. in Joh.*, 19, 31, hom. 85.

Naturally, these mystical acts and symbols must be kept from the eyes of the uninitiated. Therefore the shouting by the deacon after the first part of the service is over: "No one of the catechumens, no one of the hearers, not one of the unbelieving, no one of the heterodox, must remain. Let them go." The doors were watched by the ostiaries, like the guards at the doors of secret lodges. Chrysostom complains that "some uninitiated soldiers" saw the dedicated elements during the tumult.

Baptism and Supper were the special object of the secret discipline of the church. "What is that which is secret," says Augustine (on Psa. 103), "and not public in church? Sacrament of baptism and sacrament of Eucharist." To keep baptism entirely secret was impossible, but a certain fitting reserve is necessary. In one of his sermons Chrysostom is embarrassed by the presence of the uninitiated. "I wish to remind you who are initiated of the response which on that evening [perhaps Easter eve, when baptism took place] they who introduced you to the mysteries bid you make. . . . I desire to expressly utter it, but I dare not on account of the uninitiated; for these add a difficulty to our exposition, compelling us either not to speak clearly or to declare to them the ineffable mysteries. Nevertheless, as I may be able, I shall speak as through a veil."[9] Whatever was used in these holy mysteries came under the seal of secrecy until the proper time—even so harmless and universal a communication as the Lord's Prayer, because it was used in the Eucharist; just as the Creed (the Nicene) was learned or repeated at baptism, and therefore there was a certain hesitation to let outsiders hear it. The historian Sozomen (about 440) has some suspicions about recording the Nicene Creed, as his work may fall into the hands of the uninitiated. "I had thought it necessary," he says, "to reproduce the very document, as an example of the truth, in order that posterity may possess in fixed and closed form the symbol of the faith which proved pacificator at the time; but since some pious friends recommended that these truths ought to be spoken of and heard by the initiated and their initiators only, I agreed with their counsel, for it is not unlikely that some of the uninitiated may read this book."[10] Thank God, all the historians were not quite so scrupulous! "Beware," says Ambrose, "that you do not divulge the mystery [the word is technically the secret mystery in which you were initiated] of the Creed or Lord's Prayer." These were handed down, not from father to son, or from master to pupil, but as cult secrets. Of course there were various customs which were started, no one knows by whom, but which were kept up by inertia or out of respect for those who went before or for the unwritten word of tradition: such as—so the church Father Basil alleges—the sign of the cross, turning to the east at prayer, invocation in Supper, blessing baptismal water and chrism oil, anointing catechumens, trine immersion, etc. Basil thinks some of these things came from "silent and mystical tradition," and especially that the Renunciation at baptism "comes from that unpublished and secret teaching which our fathers guarded in a silence out of the reach of curious meddling and inquisitive investigation. Well had they learned the lesson that the awful dignity of the mysteries is best preserved by silence. What the uninitiated were not even allowed to look at was hardly likely to be paraded in written documents."[1] At one's first communion he heard for the first time the Lord's Prayer. This prayer, says Theodoret, we teach not to the uninitiated, but to those being inducted into the mysteries. But in keeping up this fictitious reserve the church was inconsistent. Doctrines were being taught more or less all the time, the Nicene Creed could not be kept hidden, treatises were written on the Lord's Prayer, but still they tried to keep as sacrosanct the "mysteries" of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The church became a mystery cult, pedagogy became mystagogy.

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[9] Hom. 40 on 1 Cor. §2, ch. 15, ver. 29: *Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. xii, p. 244.

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[10] *Historia Eccl.*, 1, 20.

With the disappearance of an elaborate catechumenate in the sixth century there passed one impulse to keep up the *Disciplina Arcani.* The Eastern liturgy still had the old cry about dismissing from worship the catechumens and the watching of the doors, even when these directions were not carried out literally. But the Greek and Russian worship is still a mystical allegorical drama, in which the priest at appropriate places retires behind screens and doors for secret manipulations, chantings of divine things; and in the Roman Church also the worship is a magical priestly doing, the center being the offering of the mass, whose content and method to the crowd are a secret.

Going back a little, the eminent church Father, Clement of Alexandria (about 215) conceived of Christianity as a mystical knowledge or vision of secret things. Christian truths are called divine mysteries; mysteries of the Logos, secrets. Clement's normal designation of the perfect Christian is the gnostic, the knowing one, the one thoroughly "up" in his (Clement's, not Mrs. Eddy's) Christian Science. Introduction into this is an initiation, a dedication, a hierophantism, which leads one through different degrees or grades, through the small and the great mysteries to the final epopteia or initiation into the highest mystery. He says the lower man, who without understanding lacks the keen insight of the soul that loves the vision, such a one must—like the uninitiated by the mysteries, or the ignorant of the rhythm of the choir-dances—stand outside of the divine dance as one not pure and not worthy of holy truth. It is only a few who are worthy of and competent for the higher vision and understanding. Open communication to the crowd is profanation. It was the chief sin of fallen angels that they spake out their secrets. It belongs to the nature of the Christian mysteries that it is transmitted mysteriously.

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[1] *De Spiritu sancto,* 27, 66.

In the philosophy of that time there was a feeling that the highest truths could be more presaged or divined than understood, and that led to preference for the symbol and the twilight-zone which symbols, mysteries, and myths loved best. There was philosophic truth behind symbol and myth, but this can be revealed only to the initiated in guarded ways. The common man wants only the hull or symbol; to the philosopher the inner truth is revealed. Clement was *en rapport* with that view. He shows how the truth was handed down in a concealed way by the wise, priests, philosophers, and poets. Hence the mysteries. They were founded by the old philosophers, and their myths express their knowledge of the nature of things, expressed thus to hide them from the crowd. Truth is always transmitted thus, says Clement; the higher the truth, the more this is so. A mystery can be handed down only from mouth to mouth, just as in modern times you cannot write or engrave the secrets of the lodge. "Secret things such as the godhead are intrusted to speech, not to writing." Fixing them in writing is almost profanation. For this reason Clement says that in his book he is to speak in riddles, tell without telling, reveal in a hidden way, and explain without words. He wants to mislead the heathen reader so that he will not know what is important or what is unimportant. The prophets and Saviour, he says, spoke in the same way. What would better the lives of their hearers they spoke or wrote of plainly, but the higher truths in allegories and dark sayings inaccessible to the common man. The apostles did the same. The true knowledge (*gnosis*) was handed from mouth to mouth in small circles, and it went straight back to a secret communication of the Lord to a few select disciples—a view which finds an analogy to the Neo-Pythagorean doctrine of a secret tradition springing from their master.[12]

One might think from this that Bratke is right when he says[13] that there is a perfect agreement between our Church Father and the main views of the mysteries on the origin, object, and nature of religion, as well as on revelation. I agree with Anrich that this is going too far, because (1) we really do not know what were the main views of mystery religions on these questions; (2) the philosophers sought to attest their own views from the mysteries, myths, and oracles, forcibly interpreted their views into the mysteries, and falsified them; and (3) Clement's whole attitude here was in tune with the philosophy of the time, the spirit of the age, and especially the spirit of Alexandria. Besides, Clement tried to keep true to Christian teaching, as he understood it, and scarified the pagan mysteries with the frankest description of their inanities and iniquities.[14] We need not affirm therefore that Clement's Christianity was directly influenced by the mystery religions, though for apologetic purposes to win the favor of rulers in an age of persecution he may have used both ideas and terminology too freely.

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[12] Throughout the Stromata of Clement the reader will find full proof of the above, und in Anrich, *Das antike Mysterienwesen in seinen Einfluss auf das Christentum*, 1894, pp. 130–141, he will find these points and corroborating passages quoted in the notes.

[13] *Die Stellung des Clem. Al. zum antiken Mysterienwesen*, in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 1887, p. 667.

[14] *Protrep.* 2.

Before I close, a word should be said on some closer analogies. In the fourth and fifth centuries baptism and exorcism (driving out evil spirits by adjuration or other magical means by priest) went together. The priest unties the girdle of the candidate, takes off all his clothing except a short undershirt, and turns him thus almost naked toward the east. This is for exorcism before the baptism. Other descriptions speak of humble bearing, bending of the neck, standing on a rough garment (the cilicium, made of Cilician goats' hair), and the veiling of the face. The mysteries did the same: the veiling of the head, the laying aside of shoes and clothing, in some representations having a ram's skin around him, in others perfectly naked, in others slightly clad, bending of the neck, etc. Of course we could not say that the church directly borrowed from the mysteries. But it is evident that the similar ceremonies in both sprang from the same source, perhaps our good old (or bad old) human nature, the same source to which sagacious Whately traced errors of Catholicism. Resemblances are striking.

Anointing with oil came in with baptism in the same period as exorcism; while baptism brought forgiveness of sins and regeneration, anointing gave the Holy Spirit. This was the general view, though Cyril of Jerusalem looked upon it as completing the sacrament in wiping out traces of sin and driving out the invisible powers of evil. But anointing was such a universal custom in antiquity that we cannot say the church borrowed it from the mystery cults. Judaism used it, the early church used it for healing (Jas. 5. 14), heathens used it in consecrating sacred objects, Gnostics were familiar with it, and the mystery initiations of course. It was part of the theurgy of the latter. Marcion used it, but with what intent Tertullian does not say.[15] When the church became heathenized more or less in the fourth century, she took on as a matter of course the widespread magic rite of anointing in the baptismal service.

According to the later Roman ritual, in the baptismal service before the anointing the ears and nose of the candidate were touched with spittle, with the Latin words: "That which is to open in the odor of sweetness be put out of use [for evil]. But do thou flee, O devil, for the judgment of God draws near." In the ancient purification rites cleansing effects were ascribed to spittle. In what stood for infant baptism in the Greek ceremonies of the Amphidromia, touching the forehead and the lips of the child with spittle is mentioned. Thus Persius, the Roman satirist: "Behold the grandmother or the maternal aunt fearing the gods takes the boy out of the cradle, and purifies his forehead and his driveling lips with the middle finger and the lustral spittle."[16] In some churches the ceremony of feet-washing was used in connection with baptism, and that was also a custom in heathen purifications.

After the fourth century it was a common custom to clothe the newly baptized and anointed with a white linen garment, which was worn during the Easter week and put off in a solemn way. Anrich gives numerous instances of a like custom among the heathen and in the mysteries, but it is hard to say whether it was directly borrowed from them or arose from the same impulse of symbolism. Other heathen customs, like the crowning of the head, the tying of a fillet around the forehead, or the holding in the hand a burning handkerchief or torch, were used both in church and mysteries. This is true also of offering to the neophyte a mixture of barley and milk. Baptism given only at night, preceded by abstinence and fasting, the assembled church watching all Easter night, the church strangely illuminated on these occasions by clever means, the service itself held a secret, the unbaptized strictly prohibited from entering the baptistry, the candidates not allowed to enter until they have gone through certain "holy" transactions on the porch, the solemn procession of lights—everything in connection with baptism, perhaps more so with the Eucharist—was calculated to impress all concerned with the fact that Christianity need not bow to paganism, to Eleusis or Isis or Mithras, so far as mystery is concerned. Yes, as Israel the Egyptians, so the ancient Catholic Church had despoiled the heathen.

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[15] *Adv. Marc.* 1, 14.

[16] Persius, *Sat.* 2. 31.

CHAPTER IV

DID THE EARLY CHRISTIANS WORSHIP JESUS?

There were two strong reasons why the Christians of the first two or three centuries should not worship Jesus unless compelled by valid reasons which they could not resist. The first is the influence of the Old Testament and Jewish background. Worship paid to any one except God was forbidden by awful penalties, and it was the glory of all devout Jews that they could not be induced even by death to break that fundamental law. By and by the Roman Empire recognized this principle and did not compel them to idolatry. Now all Christians, whether Jewish or Gentile, stood over against this Jewish background. The Old Testament was their first universally recognized Bible, whose spiritual precepts they accepted and on which they fed. It passed into their blood like iron. To worship none but God was the cardinal idea of that Testament which was the master light of all the church's seeing.

The second reason is the revulsion of Christians from all forms of pagan idolatry. Big gods and little gods, Jupiter, his father and his offspring, the new emperor cult—all were alike proscribed. Thousands of Christians went to death because they would not throw a little incense on the altar of some old or new god, or make obeisance to the emperor's image. Would they make an exception of Jesus, and worship a crucified Jew? But you say: "Might they not borrow the pagan cult of these lesser worships? Might they not elevate Jesus to a Christian pantheon, as they did many of the saints in the later Middle Ages?" Well, they might, and then again, they might not. As a matter of fact, they did not. There is no trace of Mary worship in ancient Christianity, and even in any age of Christianity before the Reformation no instructed Catholic would admit that he prayed to Mary as a goddess, but only as to an eminent saint to assist him in her prayers to God. There is not only no trace of bringing in demigods or associate gods in early Christianity, but the two reasons I have just mentioned hindered anything like that from the start.

This being so, it is all the more striking that we find traces of Jesus worship in our earliest records. I do not lay stress on the numerous cases of *προσκύνω* in the Gospels, where it is said that the magi, the leper, Jairus, mother of James and John, woman of Canaan, etc., "worshiped" Jesus. You remember how the Revisers of 1881 were particular to tell us that the Greek word denotes an act of reverence whether paid to the creature or to the Creator (marg. note, Matt. 2. 2). How far those who thus adored meant to imply divinity we shall never know, but there are other cases where the latter is suggested. When Christ appeared walking on the sea and had stilled the storm, they who were on board came and worshiped him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matt. 14. 32-33). There the worshiping was in connection with a confession of Deity to him on their part, a confession which he did not disown, and he would have disowned it with horror if he had been an honest man and not being also God (=Son of God). The same feeling of divinity must have been behind Peter's falling down at Jesus' knees after the miracle of the fishes with the exclamation, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5. 8)—the instinctive feeling of us poor sinners before the spotless majesty and holy power of divinity. When the man born blind was asked after he was cast out of the synagogue whether he believed on the Son of

God and inquired, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" and was assured that his healer was he, he said, "Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him" (John 9. 35-38). There may have been other cases in the resurrection appearances (Matt. 28. 9, 17; John 20. 17), though we are not sure; in any case the overwhelming proof of his actual resurrection to a disciple not given to credulity irrevocably stamped the impression of Deity on him who "answered and said" (a deliberate confession, not "exclaimed" or "burst out"), "My Lord and my God" (John 20. 26-29).

As we go into the Acts we find the worship of Jesus taken for granted. It is not only taken for granted, but those who thus call upon his name are regarded as Christians without more ado. To be a Christian is just synonymous with "to call on the name of Jesus" (Acts 9. 14, 21). Christians were known as those who prayed to Jesus, even used his name as sacred, equal for purposes of worship to that of Jehovah ("calling upon thy name, calling upon the name of Jesus"). Of this an illustrious example was given by that bright and thoughtful preacher, the martyr Stephen. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon [the Lord], and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7. 59, 60). This prayer, at once spontaneous and deliberate, shows how natural such worship of Jesus was to the first Christians, who as Jews were guilty of blasphemy unless they considered their Master as the eternal Son of God to be worshiped with the Father. When Ananias was sent to lead Paul into the light, it is Christ who sends him ("Lord"=Christ, see 9. 17), and he prays to this Christ ("Lord") and almost expostulates with him in a way so familiar and yet reverential that we see how natural and easy was the worship of Jesus in apostolic times (9. 10-17). Ananias calls the Christians not

God the Father's "saints," but "thy saints," and he defines Christians as "all that call on thy name" (ver. 14). Remember all these were Jewish Christians: the difference alleged as to this between Jewish and Gentile Christians is a fiction. All equally worshiped Christ.

When we take up Paul's Epistles we see the same recognition of the worship of Jesus as natural for Christians, something so characteristic that they may be known by it among themselves and by their opponents. He writes to the church at Corinth as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs [Lord] and ours" (1 Cor. 1. 2). There is a prayer to Christ in 1 Thess. 3. 11: "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you"; and in 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." In both these remarkable prayers to the Father and to the Son, the subjects are plural, but the verbs are singular; as though both Son and Father were consolidated in an ineffable and glorious life, which made one activity of directing, comforting, and establishing. Here the Son is worshiped equally with the Father. The same worship appears in Phil. 2. 19. We all say, "Hope in God," but Paul here says, "Hope [trust] in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly." And for the blessings of his ministry he thanks not God the Father in so many words, but Jesus. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord for giving me power, that he counted me faithful, putting [me] into service (*διακονίαν*, 1 Tim. 1. 12). To Paul, Jesus is the source of all his gifts and blessings, the ever-bountiful giver of all good things, his guide and friend.

This worship of Jesus is not only prayer and lifting up of hearts in thanksgiving for all divine blessings, it is also confession before men. The man of the world will have a certain reverence before God; he may even pray to him in emergencies; he will join lodges in which he has to acknowledge a God, and even in some sense worship him; and he thinks that that acknowledgment or worship gives him a certain standing before God, a sort of silent right to heaven. That is one chief reason for the popularity of secret fraternities. They give men religion without the cross, prayer without the new birth, God without Christ—and in giving them so much they persuade themselves that they have all they need—the church of the men of the world. (I speak historically only.) But not so Paul. Confession must go further. "Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus [as] Lord, shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart," etc. For the Scripture saith [Isa. 28. 16]: "Everyone believing in him [Christ] shall not be put to shame. For there is no difference between Jew and Greek: for this same Lord of all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (quoting Joel 2. 32; see Romans 10. 9-14). Here Paul makes the strongest basis possible for the worship of Christ by making salvation depend both on confessing him for the world and calling upon him for yourself; and he even goes so far as to quote passages from Isaiah and Joel which refer to Jehovah as meaning "Christ" (that he really means Christ here, see verses 9 and 17).

When he was tormented by some fleshly ill, he besought not God the Father but the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 12. 8, 9), and in his benedictions, which were really prayers, in one place he couples Christ with the Father ("Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1. 3), and in the other he prays to Christ alone ("The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you"—Rom. 16. 20). And this worship of Jesus is by the author of Hebrews taken for granted as given by angels as by man: When the firstborn was brought into the habitable world, he said, "Let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1. 6). On this Delitzsch comments: "The principle from which the author proceeds is this: Everywhere in the Old Testament where there is spoken of a final, decisive, future (Parousia) manifestation, and demonstration of Jehovah in his judging and salvation-bringing power, of a revelation of Jehovah symbolical for the Mosaic time, of a self-representation of Jehovah as king of his kingdom—there Jehovah=Jesus Christ; for this last is Jehovah manifest in the flesh, Jehovah come into humanity and into history, Jehovah gone up as the sun of salvation over his people. This principle is incontestably true; upon it rests the history of salvation, the deepest unity of both Testaments," etc.[1] Finally (for I must not dwell longer on the apostolic age), this worship of Jesus as God is fully witnessed by John the apostle who knew Jesus intimately.

These things have I written unto you that you may know that you have life eternal, unto you believing on the name of the Son of God [not so much on God the Father]. And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he [not simply the Father] heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from him (1 John 5. 13-15). There is more in the New Testament, but having given this passage from John as to the worship of Jesus, more need not be said.

But you say, "There was a polytheistic atmosphere around the first Christians which might induce a Jesus cult." Later the atmosphere did in fact exist. I would not deny that from the fourth century on through the Middle Ages influences of this kind acted, especially after the close of persecution and the incoming of heathen in large numbers into the church. There was, however, very little of this pagan influence for two hundred years or more, and what there was had to do with sacraments, not with the doctrine of God. There was nothing of polytheism in the thoroughly Jewish minds of New Testament writers, in whom their cardinal precept, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Our God is one," was as controlling as the multiplication table to a mathematician.

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[1] *Comm. zum Briefe an die Hebräer*, pp. 24–29.

You say again, "Did not Mary worship and saint cults come in, and why could not a Jesus cult have formed early?" Yes, Mary worship began in the last half of the fifth and the sixth centuries, but not before. In the first centuries there was no occasion to speak of her. It is true that certain Gnostics had notions of a sort of intermediate deities, angels, æons, to which they paid homage; but Paul brushes aside their contemptible idolatry with disdain (Col. 2. 18). There were thus no half-worships in primitive Christianity by which as on a ladder believers could mount up to the bigger idolatry of the worship of Jesus. That worship sprang full grown from the heart and brain of the first Christians because they had in him —and knew that they had—their Lord, their Saviour, their God.

Could not Christ worship have grown up like Buddha worship? Perhaps it could, and perhaps it could not; only we know that it did not. It was indigenous in the church from the first. But among intelligent Buddhists there is no Buddha worship. They all understand he was a man simply. Says Saint Hilaire:

> Buddha remains a man; he never seeks to pass the limits of humanity, beyond which he never thought. The enthusiasm of his disciples has been also reserved to the same. In the innocent cult which they render to him, their fervor addresses itself to a

> consoling and fortifying memory; their interested superstition never addresses itself to his power. Neither the pride of Sakya-Mouni (the Buddha) nor the fanaticism of his believers has conceived a sacrilege; Buddha, however great he believed himself, never at all risked an apotheosis. No person ever dreamed of making him a god.[2] My colleague, Professor Buck, says that in certain parts of the East Buddha is now worshiped as a god.

I find in the eminent commentator Meyer's notes on Rom. 12. 12 (5th ed. 1872, the last which received the impress of his own hand: his works are still invaluable), the following remarks:

> The calling upon Christ [Meyer interprets Lord in all these verses as referring to Christ, not the Father], who nowhere in the New Testament appears as *identical* with Jehovah of the Old Testament, is not worshiping *absolutely*, as that takes place only in respect to the Father as the one absolute God; but, rather, worship according to that relativity in the consciousness of the worshiper, which is conditioned by the relation of Christ to the Father, whose Son of like nature, image, partner of the throne, mediator and advocate on behalf of men, etc., he is. This [exegetical opinion of Meyer] is not imported as an Origenistic gloss [Origen while holding to the full deity of Jesus believed that as Son he was subordinate; Philippi claimed Meyer was influenced by Origen here], but is necessarily founded on the dependence and subordination in which even the glorified God man Christ, in virtue of his *munus regium*, stands in relation to the Father. See [Meyer] on 1 Cor. 3. 23; 11. 3; 15. 28. He who calls upon Christ is conscious that he does not call upon him as the absolute, but as the divine-human Representative and Mediator exalted to the divine glory, in whom God's adequate revelation of salvation has been given (p. 412, Am. ed.).

While I agree with Dwight (then professor of New Testament, Yale) that there is nothing in the text itself on which Meyer bases the words just quoted, and with Alford that in these passages Paul unhesitatingly applies to Jesus the name and attributes of Jehovah, yet the remarks of Meyer in themselves are quite innocent. In the

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[2] *Le Bouddha*, 1862, p. 168.

Christian worship of God there are three aspects or forms: (1) worship of the Father as the source and fount of Deity, (2) worship of the Son as Son and Lord and Mediator and eternal Redeemer, and (3) worship of the Holy Spirit as giver of light and love and life—these not being three separate worships (so to speak), but one gracious adoration of our ever-blessed God in the rich manifoldness of his being. The important word in Meyer is "identical"; and he means in the spirit of the earliest Greek Fathers to distinguish the Father from Christ as the originating impulse in God, which the consciousness of the Christian recognizes in his worship of Christ. The latter, however, is, according to Meyer, *wesensgleicher Sohn,* which is hardly adequately rendered by "Son of like nature" of the Edinburgh translation, but is, rather, "Son of the same essence," or coessential, cosubstantial. While he is of the same essence and therefore truly divine and worthy of worship, the Son is still Son and Mediator, and therefore, in Meyer's words, dependent and subordinate to the Father. But so far as Paul's exegesis here of the Old Testament goes, he puts Christ in the very place of Jehovah, which for a Jew of Jews shows how the ineffable glory of Christ had struck home upon him.

Zahn (Theod.) refers to Caligula placing his statue as a god in the temple in Jerusalem and says:

> Not the circumstance that it was just such an emperor as Caligula, but the fact that a man demanded divine reverence from those who "knew whom they worshiped" called out the death-defying anger of all Jews. And the Christians in Palestine and the missionaries who from there brought the Gospel to the heathen were also Jews, genuine Israelites in this matter: the whole circle whose worship of Jesus we are treating. It was a tradition among them that Jesus confessed himself to the fundamental article of Israelitish faith, to the One God alone worthy of worship. [He refers to Matt. 4.10: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Also Mark 12.28-34; John 17.3.] They preached this article to those who did not know him as yet; and yet more, as through the con-

tinuing connection with Israel and its cultus, the judgment became living through the constant touch with heathenism that every worship paid to the creature rather than the Creator was an exchange of truth for a lie, a blasphemy calling for God's anger and to every pious person a horror. See Rom. 1. 25; Acts 14. 15; 17. 16; 1 John 5. 20; James 2. 19. As the seer John [overwhelmed by the glory that was shown him] fell down [in a moment of confusion] worshiping the angel, he heard the warning, "See that you do it not; I am thy fellow slave. Worship God" (Rev. 19. 10; 22. 9). Before the Lord Jesus, however, who appeared to him, he fell down, without hearing anything except words of consolation to save him from perishing from fear before the worship-worthy majesty of the eternal Living One. (1. 17, 18).[3]

Going into the postapostolic writers, let us see what we find there. Of course the normal prayer is that to the Father through the Son, but the Oriental conception of "for the sake of," "in the name of," is much more massive and realistic than our own. It almost identifies the two parties thus brought into relation.

We now have the famous prayer of Clement of Rome in the last part of his Epistle to Corinthians (A. D. 97), discovered by Bryennios in 1873 (in the same batch of Greek manuscripts which contained the *Didache*), and published in 1875 (chapters 58-63). Here the prayer is to the Father, but the Son is brought in with him in a way which would be blasphemous if he were not associated as divine in the worship. "Through Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom thou didst instruct us, sanctify us, honor us" (59). "We praise thee through the High Priest and Guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be the glory and majesty unto thee both now and forever" (61). "Through the Holy Spirit" (63). "Well pleasing unto his name through our High Priest and Guardian Jesus Christ, through whom unto him be glory and majesty," etc. (64). "The grace of our Lord

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[3] See Zahn, *Die Anbetung Jesu in Zeitalter der Apostel*, in *Skizzen aus dem Leben der Alten Kirche*, Leipzig, 1898 (2 Aufl.), pp. 291–92.

Jesus Christ be with you and with all men in all places who have been called by God and through him, through whom be glory and honor, etc., unto him," etc. (65).

Ignatius is speaking of worship when he says (*ad Magn.* 7, A. D. 110-117): "Hasten to come together all of you as to one temple, even God, as to one altar, even to one Jesus Christ [truly said, Jesus Christ is the only altar in Christianity], who came forth from One Father and is with One and departed unto One." "Supplicate the Lord [which here means Christ] for me," he asks the Romans, "that through these instruments I may be found a sacrifice to God" (*ad Rom.*, § 4). His prayer may also be taken as worship: "Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the eternal High Priest himself, the [Son of] God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth . . . who shall believe on our Lord and God Jesus Christ and on his Father who raised him from the dead" (*ad Philad,* § 12). The introduction to Polycarp's Epistle to Philippians (about 150) unites Christ to the Father as object of the prayer or benediction: "Mercy unto you and peace from God Almighty and Jesus Christ our Saviour be multiplied." Notice the prayer in Letter of Smyrnæans on the Martyrdom of Polycarp (about 155): "Mercy and peace and love from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied" (introd.). Also his Trinitarian prayer after they tied him to the stake: "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of thee . . . in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. . . . I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal and heavenly High Priest Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom with him and the Holy Spirit be glory both now and for the ages to come. Amen" (§ 14). This church distinguishes between the honor done to Jesus and that to the martyrs. "For him being the Son of

God we worship, but the martyrs as disciples and imitators of the Lord we cherish as they deserve for their matchless affection toward their own King and Teacher" (§ 17). Polycarp joins Jesus with the Father in his worship in heaven. "He rejoiceth in company with the apostles and all righteous men, glorifieth the Almighty God and Father, and blesseth in Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls and Helmsman of our bodies and Shepherd of the universal church which is through the world" (§ 19). It is through him that glory is given to the Father. "Now unto him that is able to bring us all by his grace and bounty into his eternal kingdom, through his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, be glory, honor, power, and greatness forever" (§ 20). "With whom (Christ) be glory to God for the salvation of his holy elect" (§ 22). "That the Lord Jesus Christ may gather me [Pionius, copyist] also with his elect into his heavenly kingdom; to whom be the glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever" (§ 22).

In supplementary section 11 to the Epistle to Diognetus, written—that is, this section—Lightfoot thinks by Pantænus of Alexandria (about 180-210), the church is enriched by Christ, who is apparently thus an object of worship. "He [the Father] sent forth the Word that he might appear unto the world, who being dishonored by the people and preached by the apostles was believed in by the Gentiles. This Word, who was from the beginning, who appeared as new and yet was proved to be old, and is engendered always young in the hearts of saints, He, I say, who is eternal, who to-day was accounted a Son, through whom the church is enriched and grace is unfolded and multiplied among the saints, grace which confers understanding, which reveals mysteries, which announces seasons," etc. (§ 11; translations from Apostolic Fathers, generally from Lightfoot).

We have the famous passage in 1 Apology of Justin

Martyr, 6, where Christ is coupled with the Father as the object of worship, but where, according to one interpretation, angels are also included. The Ante-Nicene translation of Dods and Reith reads: "But both him [the Father] and the Son (who came forth from him and taught us these things, and the host of the other good angels who follow and are made like to him), and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore, knowing them in reason and truth." While everybody admits the Son is placed with the Father here, there is a difficulty as to the angels, and Greek scholars are disagreed, since the text is not clear. (1) Some make the host of angels the object of the words "adore and worship," just as God is. (2) Others make "us" and "the host" the object of "taught." (3) Others still make "these things" and "the host" by an ellipsis the subject of the teaching, even the brilliant Roman Catholic scholar Möhler taking this view, though he might naturally take the first. (4) Gildersleeve (ed. *Justin,* pp. 117-8) prefers the first if we take the text as it stands, but he suggests an amended text, as he thinks the word *αρχιστράτηγον* may have dropped out. Then it would be: "We adore and worship him and the Son . . . the Commander in Chief of the host of the other good angels." He says that the word "other" in Greek does not necessarily infer similarity to the "another," though even if it did, Christ as "sent" from the Father was in that sense an "angel." The first interpretation seems excluded by Justin throwing out any worship except that of the Father, Son and Spirit. For instance, he says: "Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who, etc. . . . And we reasonably worship him, having learned that he is the Son of the true God himself, and holding him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third" (13). He mentions no others. Again: "To God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you [the emperor]" (17).

All others are excluded also in 61, speaking of baptism, where he says they "receive the washing in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit." "For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God." "And in the name of Jesus Christ," etc. It is evident that to worship angels by the side of what we call the triune God would be considered blasphemy by Justin. I have not space to quote the passages, but if the reader will turn to Origen, *Against Celsus,* 1. 26; 3. 77; 5. 6, he will see also how ingrained in the soul of the early Christians was repugnance to the worship of anyone or anything except God. And in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho,* 68, he proves from the Old Testament that Christ was to suffer, and to be worshiped, and to be or to be called God.

Irenæus says (2. 32, 5) that in the numerous miracles performed in his day (180-190) they prayed to the Lord and "called upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The brilliant philosopher-Christian of Alexandria, Clement (200-215), was not too philosophical to allow Christ to share supreme worship with the Father. "Believe, O man, in (the one who is) man and God; believe, O man, in the living God who suffered and is worshiped."[4] In the closing chapter of his *Paidagogos* he bursts out in this prayer to Christ (the Word, the Teacher, the Son). "Be gracious, O Instructor, to us thy children, Father, Charioteer of Israel, Son and Father, both in One, O Lord. Grant to us who obey thy precepts, . . . wafted in calm by thy Holy Spirit . . . and giving thanks may praise, and praising thank the alone Father and Son, Son and Father, the Son Instructor and Teacher, with the Holy Spirit, all in One in whom is all, for whom all is one, for whom is eternity, whose members we all are, whose glory the æons are; for the All-good, All-lovely,

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[4] *Protrep.* 10, ANF 201, col. 2.

All-wise, All-just One. To whom be glory now and forever. Amen."[5] Then follows Clement's celebrated hymn to Christ the Saviour.

Under influence of the Platonic *το ὄν* (the Reality, literally, the being [neut.], the Something which is back of, everything), and especially in reaction against the Patripassian Monarchian doing away of Jesus as an actual human person and so as such less than the Supreme God by making him only another form or manifestation of the Father, the learned Origen in his charming treatise *On Prayer* (before 231) made the point that we should not pray to the Son, but only to the Father through the Son, certainly not to the Son as apart from the Father (§ 15). We must press on back of the Son to the Supreme Father, just as some of the German mystics wanted to rest not even in God the Father, but in the ground of deity behind God. But this did not represent Origen's whole attitude on the worship of Jesus. In his Homily on Exodus (after 244) he himself prays to Jesus. "O Lord Jesus, grant to me that I may be worthy to have some monument in thy tabernacle."[6] In another: "We must pray to the Lord himself and to the Holy Spirit himself that he would deign to take away every mist," etc.[7] "It behooves me to pray to my Lord Jesus that he would make me the seeking one find," etc.[8] "The apostle in those words (1 Cor. 1. 2) declares him to be God whose name was called upon. And if to call upon the name of the Lord and to pray to God is one and the same, then as God is called upon so is Christ called upon. And as God is prayed to so is Christ prayed to; and as we offer prayers to God the Father first of all so to our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . the same honor is to be given to both."[9] In his last book and perhaps his greatest, that against Celsus (249), he deliberately defends the worship of Christ against the reproaches of that keen philosopher, who in the spirit of a modern radical Unitarian says that if the Christians worshiped one God alone they might have valid arguments against the worship of others [Romans, Greeks, etc.], but they worship one who has only lately appeared (Celsus wrote about 177). Origen not only does not deny this, he stoutly defends it with arguments.[10]

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[5] *Paid.* 3.12, ANF 295, col. 2.

[6] Hom. 13 in Exod. 35, in Migne, *Pat. Gr.* tom. 12, col. 390.

[7] Hom. 1 in Levit tom. 12, col. 406.

[8] Hom. 5 in same tom. 12, cols. 454–56.

I have gone as far as broad-minded Origen, and there is not space to go further, though the evidence is alluring. Yes, the early Christians worshiped Jesus. The only question is whether they were idolaters, or whether he was the eternal Son who with the Father is to be praised, glorified, and adored. I have seen these words of Lessing quoted in German: "If Jesus is not true God, the Mohammedan religion is incontestably better than the Christian, and the Mohammed himself an incomparably greater and worthier man than Christ."

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[9] Comm. in Rom. 10, bk. 8, tom. 14, cols. 1165–66.

[10] *Contra Celsum* 8. 12 and 13, see also ch. 26; in 1. 60 he says the Magi offered to Jesus frankincense as to God, "for he was God"; see also 5. 12.

CHAPTER V

WERE THE EARLY CHRISTIANS TRINITARIANS?

THE doctrine of the Trinity is a development of Christian theology. That is neither for nor against the fact of the Trinity, if it be a fact. The doctrine may be a true expression of the fact, or it may be an untrue expression, or it may be partly both.

The idea is that God is not a single unity, like a mathematical point, but is a complex unity, like the soul of man, and that that complexity is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the Father the fountain of the divine life, the Son the expression of the Father's love (for love cannot exist in the nature of things without an object), and the Holy Spirit the connecting bond of the union between Father and Son, and in and for the Son the agent of all life-giving processes of God. And, further, the thought behind the Trinity is that this manifoldness of being in God is not historical, so to say, but is essential; that is, that God did not begin at some "time" in his being to be Father, did not start somewhere in eternity to take on an increase of being, to become more of a God than he was before by becoming Father, but that he was always Father because he was always God.

It is not my purpose to canvass the New Testament territory; only I might say in passing that the substance of what came to be called the doctrine of the Trinity is in the New Testament, and was witnessed in the apostolic church. Not only is the Son differentiated from the Father, and the Spirit from both; they are placed together, yet kept distinct in that placing, so that you get the actual beginning of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Take the famous Trinitarian benediction with which Paul closes Second Corinthians: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." This Epistle was written from the very heart of the Christian society, in the first glow of Christianity, only about fifteen years from the crucifixion. It shows that the idea of God as Father, Son, and Spirit was embedded in the Christian consciousness; it was a part of the universal Christian reaction to the thought of God; and numerous passages in the New Testament—some of them incidental—show the same almost unconscious taking for granted what came to be called the Trinitarian conception. How could this be unless there was a living tradition to that effect going back to Christ himself? With the tremendous conviction of monotheism, on which Christianity rested, could Christians take as a matter of course this relegation of God into Father, Son, and Spirit unless the words of Christ in Matt. 28. 19 lived on in the church? And if you will study these passages you will soon see that the mere modal Trinity or historical manifestation Trinity is not sufficient. God cannot be the Father of himself; and the Spirit which reveals God, testifies of Christ, and by whom only we commune with God, cannot be absolutely the same with God and with Christ. For although Christianity is above reason, it is never contradictory to reason or against it, nor absurd, nor a verbal puzzle. In other words, in the very being of God himself there must be, according to the New Testament, distinctions which we call Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Let us now take the postapostolic Fathers. Clement of Rome has the same distinctions (97 A. D.):

> The ministers of the grace of God through the Holy Spirit (8). For the Holy Spirit saith (13), The scepter of the majesty of

God, even our Lord Jesus Christ, came not in the pomp of arrogance or of pride, though he might have done so, but in lowliness of mind, according as the Holy Spirit spake concerning him (16). All these things the faith which is in Christ confirmeth, for he himself through the Holy Spirit thus inviteth us (22). Ye have searched the Scriptures, which are true, which were given through the Holy Spirit (45). [I quote this because Clement evidently distinguished the Spirit from the Father.] Have we not one God and one Christ and one Spirit of grace that was shed upon us? (46) [distinguishing the Spirit from Christ, both from God the Father]. For as God liveth, the Lord Jesus Christ liveth, the Holy Spirit, who are the faith and hope of the elect, so surely shall he, etc. (58). Written by us through the Holy Spirit (63). [And although in his final benediction Clement does not bring in the Holy Spirit, that is—so to speak—by accident, as it is evident by other passages that in his mind the Spirit had his own place in the life of God.] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all men in all places who have been called by God and through him, through whom be the glory and honor, power and greatness, and eternal dominion unto him from the ages past and forever and ever. Amen. (65.)

In the Ancient Homily (the so-called "2 Clement," perhaps 140) the Holy Spirit is differentiated from the Father and Christ. "He shall receive her [the church] again in the Holy Spirit. . . . So excellent is the life and immortality which this flesh can receive as its portion, if the Holy Spirit be joined to it" (14).

In Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (110-117), though Christ and the Father are chiefly in evidence, the Spirit is not ignored.

"Prepared beforehand for the building of God the Father, being hoisted up to the heights through the engine of Jesus Christ which is the cross, using for a rope the Holy Spirit; while your faith is your windlass, and love is the way that leadeth up to God."[1] "The prophets, being his [Christ's] disciples, were expecting him as their teacher through the Spirit."[2] "Be ye confirmed in the ordinances of the Lord and his apostles, that ye may prosper in all things whatsoever ye do in flesh and spirit, by faith and by love, in the Son and in the Spirit, in the beginning and in the end."[3] "Entreat ye for me that I may through the Holy Spirit"[4] (the words "through the Holy Spirit" are not in all MSS.). "With the deacons that have been appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ, whom after his own will he confirmed and established by his Holy Spirit."[5]

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[1] *Ad Eph.*, 9.

[2] *Ad Mag.*, 9.

When we think how many times Ignatius speaks of Christ, the fewness of the times in which he speaks of the Holy Spirit is striking; but, though few, they are fit; fit because they are appropriate and sufficient. That is, he distinguishes between the Spirit and Christ, and between the Spirit and the Father. He recognizes distinctly what came to be called the Trinity—the germ of that doctrine is in Ignatius.

The letter of the Smyrnæans on the Martyrdom of Polycarp (perhaps 155-163) is a genuine document of our early time, and it gives evidence of beginnings of the doctrine of the Trinity. And, as written by one church to another, it may be taken as an unconscious tribute to a more or less universal feeling. "I bless thee that thou hast granted me this day and hour that I might receive a portion amongst the number of the martyrs in the cup of (thy) Christ unto resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and of body, in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. . . . For this cause, yea, and for all things, I praise thee. I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom and with him and the Holy Spirit be glory both now and for the ages to come. Amen (14). . . . That the Lord Jesus Christ may gather me also with his elect into the heavenly kingdom; to whom be the glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and forever. Amen" (22).

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[3] *Ad Mag.*, 13.

[4] *Ad Rom.*, 8.

[5] *Ad Philad.*, Introd

The Teaching of the Apostles, or, as the title itself reads, "The Teaching of the Lord to the Nations through the Twelve Apostles" (the Didache), dated by Lightfoot in the beginning of the second century (probably about 120-125), is a manual for the deliberate instruction of the church, and as an early document is all the more important: "Concerning Baptism, thus shall ye baptize. Having first recited all these things, baptize into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in living (running) water. But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water; and if thou canst not in cold, in warm. But if thou hast neither, pour water on the head thrice into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (7). The writer also speaks of the Spirit in a way to recall the use of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures as the source of enlightenment. "And any prophet speaking in the Spirit ye shall try (11). And whosoever shall say in the Spirit, give," etc. (11).[6]

The Epistle of Barnabas (perhaps 70-79, or later, date uncertain). "The ordinances of God. . . . The Spirit poured out among you from the riches of the fount of the Lord (1). The Spirit of the Lord foresaw" (6). Barnabas has much about the Lord, God, Christ, but mentions the Spirit only two or three times, and then in a way that seems to distinguish him from God the Father and Christ.

The Shepherd of Hermas (about 140) distinguishes between Father and Spirit in a unique way. In Sim. 5. 2 there is a parable of an estate or vineyard, where the lord or master means God; the servant to whom he gave the vineyard means the Son ("the servant is the Son of God," 5. 5), and the Son with whom he takes counsel is the Spirit. In 5. 6 he speaks of the holy, pre-existent spirit dwelling in the flesh. "This flesh [evidently the same as person or Christ] lived honorably in chastity, labored with the Spirit, and behaved boldly and bravely; then God chose this flesh or person as a partner of the holy spirit." Now, whether Hermas means that the pre-existent Christ was holy spirit or Holy Spirit, and that the latter dwelt in the flesh of Jesus, we do not know. When he speaks of the Son cleansing our sins by laboring much and enduring many toils (56) he certainly refers to Christ, and by the holy, pre-existent spirit who dwelt in the flesh he probably meant that Christ was that spirit—that is, that he was a spiritual being before his incarnation, and not that he was the Holy Spirit. We know that the baptismal formula was well known; it is hard to think of anyone about the year 140, to whom that formula was familiar, confusing the Holy Spirit with Christ. At the same time Scripture teaches that Christ was really holy spirit. "Now the Lord is the spirit [or Spirit], and where the spirit [or Spirit] of the Lord is, is liberty . . . even as from the Lord the spirit [or Spirit]" (2 Cor. 3. 17, 18). Here the Lord is evidently Christ (see 4. 5). This reference to Christ as spirit was not unknown in the second century. "If Christ the Lord, who saved us, being first spirit, then became flesh, so called us," etc.[7] "So also in the end, the Word of the Father and the spirit of God, having become united with the ancient substance of Adam's formation."[8] It seems better, therefore, to interpret Hermas as referring to the pre-existent Christ as spirit than as the Holy Spirit. The parable in Sim. 5. 2 certainly pre-supposes three divine "Persons." It is clear also from Sim. 9. 1 that Hermas was in the habit of using "Holy Spirit" in more than one sense, not only as the Son or Christ, but as the church, which is also Son of God. "I wish to show thee all things that the holy spirit, which spake to thee in the form of the church showed unto thee. For that spirit is the Son [or son] of God." Perhaps Seeberg expresses the truth in the thought that a thorough dogmatic distinction between Son and Spirit had not been carried through by the time of Hermas; just as Paul, who plainly distinguishes between the Spirit and Christ in 2 Cor. 13. 14, yet says also that the Lord (Christ) is the spirit (or Spirit, 3. 17); and just as Christ, in John 14. 16-18, almost merges himself in the Holy Spirit, and vice versa.[9]

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[6] Numerous editions in Europe and America, 1884–85. Discovered 1873; published in Constantinople in December, 1883.

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[7] Anc. Hom.-"2 Clem." 19.

[8] Iren. 5. 1, 3. See other references in Seeberg, *Hist. Doct.*, 1. 59.

Remember also that, if Christ had any pre-existence at all, it could only have been as spirit. But Hermas is an allegory, and his names and conceptions are not clearly distinguished. He had the idea of God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but how he distinguished them we can hardly say.

I would say, then, that the apostolic Fathers (97-140) had the germ of the doctrine of the Trinity, but they did not have the doctrine. It was too early to enter into reflections on the unity and diversity of the Divine Being, and to their naïve faith an exact determination of the hypostases in God lay at a distance. It was fitting that the Father who dwelt geographically nearest the biblical center—namely, Ignatius of Antioch—should have the clearest conception.[10] The Ancient Homily ("2 Clem.") confesses God, the Father of Christ, Christ who was spirit (or Spirit) and became flesh, and the Holy Spirit as the power through which the church, which is thought of as pre-existent in some sense, is realized or is upheld (14). "That ye may prosper," says Ignatius, "in flesh and spirit, by faith and by love, in the Son and Father and in the Spirit."[11] The triadic formula was thus in full swing, and the third member of it was not simply another name of God the Father. In that case there would have been only a dualistic formula. A formula is not a rhetorical flourish. If the formula "Father and the Lord Christ" is the designation of the whole revelation of the divine Being, as Seeberg says,[12] that is only as including Holy Spirit in the background, and must have been so in a church which was reading 2 Cor. 13. 14. The reason that Paul's greetings to the churches, in the beginning of his Epistles, do not by name include the Holy Spirit ("Grace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ") is that, in the historical situation, the position of Christ as the mediator of salvation was in the foreground of his thought and theirs, and, when once the place of Christ was assured, that of the Holy Spirit was taken for granted. If in the greeting he mentioned God the Father only, it was as though he were writing to regular Jews, or even to heathens; but in adding Christ he added everything else pertinent to Christianity. And when, later, Judaism threw up to Christians that they were ditheists,[13] that meant, not that Christians did not confess also the Holy Spirit, but that their confession of Jesus the Nazarene as the Son of God, besides, of course, God the Father, filled the horizon of the Jews' objection and hatred. Loofs has so emphasized this confession of the Father and Christ that he has called the early Christians binitarians, rather than Trinitarians.[14] That does not help us much, for, however much the Father and Christ are spoken of together, it is undeniable that the triadic or Trinitarian formula existed from the beginning, and went along with the twofold designation. And when it is said that the Spirit went out from God, or the Father, to possess Christ or inspire Christians, did that mean that the Spirit was identical with Father any more than it meant that the Spirit was identical with Christ, when it is said that the latter sent the Spirit? He did not send himself. Christ may be thought of as including the Spirit in himself, in the sense that the Spirit has no function except to testify of him and make him effective in humanity. So the early Christians might be called binitarians. But Trinitarian conceptions and forms of speech ever and anon appear, and that binitarism can be looked upon, not as a rival form of expression to Trinitarism to explain early Christian views, but as an abbreviation of it.[15]

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[9] See Seeberg's *Dogmengeschichte*, 2 Aufl., 1908, 1. 99, note.
[10] See Ignatius in *ad Eph.*, 9, and *ad Philad.*, Introd.
[11] *ad Mag.*, 13.

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[12] *Dogmengeschichte*, 2 Aufl., 1.111.
[13] Weber, *Altsynag. Theol.*, 148.
[14] Hauck, *Realencyk.*, 3 Aufl., 4. 26f.

Justin Martyr (about 140 A. D., 1 *Apol.;* 150, *Trypho;* and 160, 2 *Apol.*), the first learned convert to Christianity in the second century, has clear echoes of our teaching.

> But both him (the most true God, the Father of righteousness) and the Son who came forth from him and taught us these things and (taught)[16] the host of the other good angels who follow and are made like him, and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore, knowing them in reason and in truth (1 *Apol.*, 6). And that we reasonably worship him [Jesus Christ], having learned that he is the Son of the true God himself, and holding him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third, we will prove (13). When the Spirit of prophecy speaks . . . our Jesus Christ, . . . but God foreknowing all (42, 44). He [Plato] gives the second place to the Logos, which is with God, who he said was placed crosswise in the universe; and the third place to the Spirit who was said to be borne upon the water (59). For in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of a Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit they then receive the washing with water (61). For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God. . . . And in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed (61). And the president of the brethren, taking them [Eucharistic elements], gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit (67). [In *Trypho,*

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[15] See Seeberg, *lib. cit.*, 112, note.

[16] This is probably the construction. Cf. 1 *Apol.*, 13, 16, 61.

54, Justin distinguishes between the Holy Spirit and Christ, and in 56 between the Holy Spirit and God.] One is called God by the Holy Spirit besides him who is considered Maker of all things (56; p. 224, *A. N. F.*). This [passage] referred to Christ, and you maintain him to be pre-existent God, and having become incarnate by God's will to be born man by the virgin . . . and he is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit (87).

It is not necessary to continue quotations from this ablest of the first apologists, who in the years 140-160 witnessed clearly to the substance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, Gaul, about 180, in his book against the Gnostics, did not have to treat the Trinity. But incidentally he distinguishes the Holy Spirit from the Father. He speaks of those "who have received the Spirit of God, by which we cry, Abba, Father." "What shall the complete grace of the Spirit effect, which shall be given to man by God?" (5. 8.) He also distinguishes the Spirit from the Son. "He [Paul] manifestly declares the body to be the temple, in which the Spirit dwells. So also the Lord speaks in reference to himself: 'Destroy this temple; in three days I will raise it up' (5. 6. 2). 'Now God shall be glorified in his handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to and modeled after his own Son. For by the hands of the Father, that is by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man and not a part of man was made in the likeness of God'" (5. 6. 1). In another characteristic passage he distinguished the three so-called Persons. "Since the Lord has thus redeemed us with his own blood, giving his soul for our souls, and his flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and on the other hand attaching man to God by his own incarnation, and bestowing upon us all at his coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin" (5. 1. 1). Here we have the function of the Persons: the Son as redeemer and atoner, and as giving immortality through his incarnation, the Spirit as the only organ of communion between God and man. The good bishop, therefore, who was a pupil of Polycarp, who was a pupil of John the apostle, is not without some kind of philosophy of the Trinity. He says again: "By this arrangement, therefore, and these harmonies and a sequence of this nature, man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the uncreated God—the Father planning everything well and giving his commands, the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creating, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing, but man making progress day by day and ascending toward perfection, that is, approximating to the uncreated One. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is God" (4. 28. 3). "And since he [Christ] chose the patriarchs and those [who lived in Old Testament times] is the same Word of God who visited them through the poetic Spirit" (4. 26. 8).

We have now Irenæus' Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, discovered in December, 1904, in the Church of the Blessed Virgin at Eriwan in Armenia by Dr. Karapet Ter Mekerttshian, edited by him, and translated into German in conjunction with Dr. Erwand Ter Minassiantz, in 1907 in the celebrated Harnack series, *Texte und Untersuchungen* (31. 1), who added notes and a brief dissertation. A new translation into German was made by Weber (with help of Armenians) in 1912. A translation into English was made by the Anglican scholar J. Armitage Robinson, with admirable introduction and notes (London: S. P. C. K., 1920). The same teaching is here as in the book *Against Heresies,* the Trinity, but no explanation, no philosophy. "For he [Jesus] was named Christ, because through him the

Father anointed and adorned all things; and because on his coming as man he was anointed with the Spirit of God and his Father" (53). "Such as feared God and died in righteousness and had in them the Spirit of God. . . . But for those who after Christ's appearing," etc. (56). "For there are passages in which the Spirit of God through the prophets. . . . For that which with God is essayed and conceived of as determined to take place," etc. (67). "Now by Jacob and Israel he means the Son of God, who received the power from the Father over our life, and after having received this brought it down to us who were far off from him, when he appeared on the earth and was conversant with men, mingling and mixing the Spirit of God the Father with the creature formed by God, that might be after the image and likeness of God" (97).

We may say, then, that the early Christians, as represented by writers up to, say, 190, while they had no doctrine of the Trinity in the sense of a worked-out theology, had a doctrine in the germ—that is, believed in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, distinguished between these three, believed them all divine in the one life of the one God, and were thus Trinitarians. That is all we can say, but it is enough.

CHAPTER VI

WERE THE EARLY CHRISTIANS PREMILLENNIALISTS?

Premillennialism is that view of the Lord's Second Coming which not only emphasizes the fact of that Personal Coming, but that it is to take place before the Thousand Year Reign of Christ with his saints on earth. (The word "thousand" may be interpreted strictly or loosely.)

It may be said in general, that the first Christians had a vivid belief in the Coming and the near end of the world. It is well known that Paul shared this faith keenly, though toward the close of his life he had given up belief in the immediate Coming. That does not mean, however, that he looked for a long delay; what he probably anticipated was a postponement of a few years at the most, but not for ages. All his exhortations and those of his contemporaries are pitched to the key of, Be ready—the Judge standeth at the door. Leaving the apostolic writings as sufficiently well known, let us look at the post-apostolic witnesses.

I do not find that Clement of Rome, 97 A. D., has any reference to these subjects at all. This is the stranger as his exhortations to the Corinthians to unity would come with added emphasis if he had brought in the Second Coming. Nor, strange to say, is there anything in the Seven Greek Epistles of Ignatius, 110-117. These were written in view of his own approaching death by martyrdom, to comfort and guide the churches, and one might suppose he would refer to the Hope of the Coming. But he does not. Nor is there anything in the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (perhaps 150). There is lack also of mention of the Second Coming in the Letter of the Smyrnæans on the martyrdom of Polycarp (155-163). We must not suppose the Hope was not real from these silences, which may be accounted for either accidentally or because there was no definite occasion to mention it.

In the *Didache* or *Teaching of the XII Apostles* (100-125) there is a breaking of the silence.

> May thy church be gathered from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom; for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever and ever (9). Remember, Lord, thy church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in thy love, and gather it together from the four winds [echo of Matt. 24. 31]—even the church which has been sanctified—into thy kingdom which thou hast prepared for it; for thine is the power and the glory forever and ever. May grace come and may this world pass away (10). [Was the doxology which later came to be added to the Lord's Prayer first brought in in connection with the prayer for the gathered church and the coming in connection with it?] Be watchful for your life; let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirded, but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour in which the Lord cometh. And ye shall gather yourselves together frequently, seeking what is fitting for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you if ye be not perfected in the last season. For in the last days the false prophets and corruptors shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate. For as lawlessness increaseth they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray. And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a Son of God and shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unholy things which have never been since the world began. Then all created mankind shall come to the fire of testing and many shall be offended and perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved by the curse himself. And then shall the signs of the truth appear; first a sign of a rift in the heaven, then a sign of a voice of a trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead. Yet not all, but as it was said, The Lord shall come and all his saints with him (Zech. 14. 5). Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven (cf. Matt. 24. 30) (16, Lightfoot's transl.).

Here we do not have a clear premillennialism, for there is no mention of the Lord coming before the millennium. But it is evident that the didachist moved in a circle of ideas where the premillenarian is perfectly at home. He speaks the language. (1) He refers twice to gathering the church out of the world, and "make it a perfect church into thy kingdom which thou hast prepared." Here the word "kingdom" does not apply at all to worldly relations touched with the spirit of Christ, but to a coterie of the elect who shall reign with Christ. The world itself is to pass away. (2) There shall be an unusual activity of evil forces before the end. Among these forces is to be reckoned apostasy of Christians themselves ("the sheep shall be turned to wolves"). (3) A severe testing is to try both church and world, and many believers will fall away. (4) Visible signs will appear, a rift in the heaven, a voice of a trumpet, and a resurrection. (5) But this resurrection will not be of all, as postmillennial theory presupposes, but of the saints first. (6) Finally, the world sees the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven. The premillennial hope in its main outlines lies at the back of the didachist's mind.

The last chapter (16) is the echo of Matt. 24, except the part of the latter which refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, which, as passed, is dropped. Here the temporal shape of the kingdom of heaven in the world comes to an end, as it is the time of harvest of the end of the world. The Lord judges the unbelieving world and saves his church for a new blessed life in the future world. Dan. 12, Apoc. 13, are perhaps in the author's mind also. He avoids all calculation of times and seasons and keeps himself within the limits of the New Testament. I think von Renesse is right when he says that since the didachist avoids the Thousand Year terminology we cannot prove him a distinct chiliast (believer in thousand-year reign of Christ with his saints on earth) or anti-chiliast. But the same scholar is right also when he says:

> Yet it is probable that he was a chiliast. For chiliasm (1 Cor. 15.22-28; Rev. 20) was a general belief in the first two centuries of the church, especially in Jewish-Christian circles. As toward the middle of the second century this hope became a more distant background, new prophets proclaimed the Thousand Year kingdom as immediately near. But as these expectations proved deceptive, the time was shoved farther and farther away. . . . But the indefiniteness of the Didache on this subject [as to time, etc.], when one compares him with the extensive chiliastic doctrine of Barnabas, is a further proof of the early appearance of this book.[1]

In the Epistle of Barnabas (perhaps about 130) the unknown writer identifies the Thousand Years with the millennium which shall succeed the six thousand years of the earth's history, and which shall synchronize the Coming.

> "He ended in six days." He meaneth this that in 6,000 years the Lord shall bring all things to an end. For the day with him signified a thousand years; and this he himself beareth me witness, saying, "Behold the day of the Lord shall be as a thousand years." Therefore, children, in six days, that is in 6,000 years, everything shall come to an end. "He rested in the seventh day." This he meaneth: when his Son shall come, and shall abolish the time of the Lawless One, and shall judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun and moon and stars; then he shall truly rest on the seventh day (15). I will make the beginning of the eighth day which is the beginning of another world (15).

Here the chronological sequence is worked out with millennial care; the 6,000 years of earth's history to be followed immediately by the Coming and a reign of the Thousand Years. But what follows that the author does not say.

The Ancient Homily (so-called "2 Clement," about 140) does not go into the matter, but speaks of the kingdom as future. "If we shall have wrought righteousness in the sight of God, we shall enter into his kingdom, and shall receive the promises which 'ear hath not heard,'" etc. (11). "Let us therefore love one another that we may all come into the kingdom of God" (9). Whether he means a millennial kingdom on earth or the kingdom in heaven, he does not say.

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[1] *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel*, Geissen, 1897, pp. 71–72.

Papias was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, a disciple of John and companion of Polycarp. In the first half of the second century he went around to learn all he could about the apostles, Christianity, etc. He wrote *Oracles of the Lord,* a priceless book which is lost. We have extracts from it, however. Eusebius (about 320) says that "he says that there will be a period of ten thousand years after the resurrection, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth."[2] Jerome (about 400) says that Papias "is said to have promulgated the Jewish tradition of a millennium, and he is followed by Irenæus, Apollinaris and others, who say that after the resurrection the Lord will reign in the flesh with the saints."[3] Much earlier than these Irenæus (about 180) quotes the famous passage from Papias, whom he calls a "hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp," to this effect (as describing the time on earth "when the righteous shall rise from the dead and reign and the creation, renewed and freed from bondage, shall produce a wealth of food"):

> The days shall come in which vines shall grow, each having 10,000 shoots, and on each shoot 10,000 branches, on each branch 10,000 twigs, on each twig 10,000 clusters, on each cluster 10,000 grapes, and each grape when pressed shall yield twenty-five measures of wine. And when any of the saints shall have taken hold of one of the clusters, another shall cry, I am a better cluster, take me, bless the Lord through me. Likewise also a grain of wheat shall produce 10,000 grains, and every grain ten

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[2] *Hist. Eccl.*, 3. 39.

[3] *De Vir. Illustr.*, 18.

> pounds of fine flour bright and clean, and other fruits, seeds and the grass shall produce in similar proportions. And all the animals using these fruits which are products of the soil shall become in their turn peaceable and harmonious, obedient to man in all subjection.[4]

It is evident that in Asia Minor in the circle of John the apostle there was a widespread belief that Christ was coming in connection with the resurrection of the righteous, and that he would set up a kingdom on earth of peace and plenty. In fact, Irenæus represents this ten thousand grape passage according to the report of the elders and Papias as having been uttered by Jesus himself.

While I am speaking of Papias, who is quoted by Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, Gaul, 180-190, it suffices to say that Irenæus himself quotes with full approval, and was enamored of the same world-view. That is, this famous bishop held that in relation to the first resurrection of the righteous the Christ would return and reestablish a fruitful and beautiful earth, but I think he does not mention the thousand years. He indorses the two resurrections, as he says it is a part of fundamental justice that the righteous who have suffered should be the "first to receive the promise which God promised, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterward."[5] In the times of this kingdom, "the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above."[6] "John distinctly foresaw the first resurrection, and the inheritance in the kingdom of the earth. And what the prophets prophesied concerning it harmonized [with this]. For the Lord taught these things when he promised that he would have the mixed cup new with the disciples in the kingdom."[7]

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[4] *Haer.*, 5. 33, 3. 4.
[5] 5. 32,1.
[6] 5. 35, 2.

The philosopher Christian, Justin Martyr (wrote 140-160), had also a strong belief in the Second Coming.

> How he should come again out of glory, hear what was spoken of in reference to this by the prophet Jeremiah [he means Daniel]: Behold as the Son of man he cometh in the clouds of heaven and his angels with him.[8] For the prophets have foretold two advents of his: one which is already past, when he came as a dishonored and suffering man; the second, when according to prophecy he shall come from heaven with glory, accompanied by his angelic host, when also he shall cause the bodies of all men who have lived to arise, and shall clothe those of the worthy with immortality, and shall send those of the wicked endowed with eternal (αιωνίᾳ) sensibility into æonian fire with the foul demons.[9] [Here the conception is that of the postmillennialists, one coming at an apparent end of the world when *all* are raised, the righteous to life, the wicked to æonian fire.] His two advents. . . . For those out of all nations who are pious and righteous through the faith of Christ, look for his future appearance.[10] But the other advent in which he shall come from heaven with glory when the man of apostasy who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall do unlawful things against us as Christians (*Dial.* 110). Do you expect your people [asks Trypho] to be gathered together [on earth with Christ at his return] and made joyful with Christ and the patriarchs and prophets? . . . I and others [answers Justin] who are right-minded Christians on all points are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare (80). There was a certain man with us whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell [lit., "make"] a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general and—in short—the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place. Just as our Lord also said, They shall not marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels,

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[7] 5. 36, 3.

[8] 1 *Apol.* 51. See Dan. 7. 13.

[9] 1 *Apol.* 52 Comp, also *Dial., c. Trypho.*, 49.

[10] *Dial., c. Trypho.*, 52.

> the children of the God of the resurrection (81). [Justin places the Second Coming into the whole divine economy of salvation.] This Christ Son of God, who was before the morning star and the moon, submitted to become incarnate, and to be born of this virgin of the family of David in order that by this dispensation the serpent that sinned from the beginning, and the angels like him, may be destroyed, and that death may be contemned and for ever quit, at the Second Coming of the Christ himself, those who believe in him and live acceptably—and be no more; when some are sent to be punished unceasingly into judgment and condemnation of fire; but others shall exist in freedom from suffering, from corruption, and from grief, and in immortality (45).

It is evident that the cultured Justin, though he speaks once as though he had another view, was giving then only a general thought, and that when he goes into the matter with particularity he shows himself convinced that Christ was coming to set up a kingdom of a thousand years, and even mentions the place—Jerusalem. The second Advent stood on the same basis as the first, and was as certain in the consciousness of Christians. At the same time the wide-viewing Justin, though himself a strong millenarian, confesses that "many who belong to the pure and pious faith and are true Christians think otherwise" (80). Still he is emphatic that these are deficient, and that those who are "right-minded Christians *on all points*" are premillenarian (80).

Tertullian, the rhetorician and lawyer and later the presbyter of Carthage, perhaps in sheer ability the outstanding Christian of the last part of the second century and the beginning of the third, is also a strong believer in the First Resurrection and the Thousand Years.

> We confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely built city of Jerusalem, let down from heaven. . . . We say that this city has been provided by God for receiving the saints on their resurrection, and refreshing them with abundance of all really spiritual blessings, as a recompense for those which

> in the world we have despised or lost. Since it is both just and God-worthy that his servants should have their joy in the place where they have also suffered affliction for his name's sake. Of the heavenly kingdom this is the process. After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints who rise sooner or later according to their deserts, there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgment: we shall then be changed in a moment into the substance of angels, even by the investiture of an incorruptible nature, and so be removed to that kingdom of heaven of which we have been treating.[11]

I think therefore that no one will deny that the ideas underneath what we call Premillenarianism were perfectly at home in the early church, and so far as positive statements of church Fathers were concerned were the leading view. At least no Father for 200 years opposes it, even though some do not say anything one way or another. But their silence cannot neutralize the assertions of others. Gieseler thinks the view was practically universal, and that in the second century only the Gnostics, who were fundamental heretics, opposed it.[12] However, it must be remembered that it never came into the Rule of Faith or any Creed, where only universally received principles like resurrection of the body and eternal life found a place. In the first part of the third century the Roman presbyter Caius was an outspoken opponent, though he was a voice in the wilderness. For the strong word of Hippolytus in the same city (about 225), who came in the doctrinal succession of Irenæus, blew him away. It lived on among the people East and West, in the West represented by able Fathers like Commodian, Lactantius, and Victorinus. How did the view come to arise?

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[11] *Adv. Marc.* 3. 25, about 200, when he was in full communion with the regular church, but inclined toward Montanism which he embraced 202. In *De Resurrectione Carni*, 26, he repudiated special sanctity of Palestine or Jerusalem, though he thinks that paradise may be the holy land to which the (resurrected) flesh is promised.

[12] *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 236.

(1) Premillenarianism was greatly helped by the sensuous and worldly ideas of the Jews in regard to the Messiah's kingdom, which ideas went over more or less to the Jewish Christians, and could not help but tinge also the thoughts of the Gentile Christians.

(2) Though Paul did not teach it, there were passages in Thessalonians and other Epistles which might be interpreted favorably, and his view of the near Coming of the End, of a sudden revealing of the Power which was to destroy Antichrist, of the resurrection, etc., could be dovetailed into the scheme.

(3) The reading of apocalyptic literature by the Christians, and especially of the Apocalypse of John, worked powerfully in the same direction. (I am not saying whether the book of Revelation teaches the doctrine, or whether the Book was correctly interpreted. I am speaking of its historical influence only.)

(4) The persecution of the Christians by pagans naturally turned their thoughts to the relief which the Second Coming in this form gave them. Outside of the influence of Jewish Christianity chiliasm "received its strongest impulse from the blood baptism of the persecutions. As martyrdom was the seed, so the (premillennial) kingdom of Christ was looked upon as the harvest day of the church. Against the pressure of the present one sought consolation in the certainty of the not distant reward with its thousand-year joys in the world of the once so tortured flesh."[13]

But why did opposition to premillenarianism arise, and why did this succeed in driving it from the church, at least as the leading view? I have already spoken of the fact that the Gnostics opposed it. They were the only Christians (if you call them Christians) who did at first. They rejected this earth, our bodies, and matter as opprobrious; and therefore the idea of an earthly kingdom, to be reigned over by Christ in bodily presence, with the saints also restored in body, was fantastic and absurd, if not blasphemous. The Gnostics were the forerunners of the modern view of the spiritual Second Coming as the only true doctrine.[14] But opposition at length arose in the church. What were its causes?

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[13] Semisch-Bratke, in *Realencyk, für protestant, Theol. u. Kirche*, 3 Aufl., 3, 808.

(1) There were long lapses of persecution. These comparatively easy times caused the Christians to adapt themselves to a permanent stay on the earth as it is.

(2) The Coming was actually postponed. Christ did not come. The thought arose whether they did not mistake in expecting his near return.

(3) Christianity was spreading through preaching and through ordinary means of propaganda. It was getting to be a world-wide force as the second and third centuries wore on, and it was felt that perhaps a stroke of policy in the sudden Second Appearance of Messiah was not required for its victory.

(4) The extravagance of Montanism worked a reaction. It is certain that the doctrinal basis of Montanism as well in general as in eschatology was in agreement with the regular church. In eschatology, says Bonwetsch, the New Prophecy in essential things only strengthened the church doctrine.[15] But by 155 the belief in the *near* Coming and End was fading somewhat, and in the emphasis with which Montanus and his followers stressed the immediacy of those events there was something novel. "Montanism validated the expectation of the End with altogether special energy, and in the case of Tertullian for the attaining of his disciplinary objects. But in this he differed not from the teaching of the Catholic (the general) church. While still a Catholic Tertullian looked with enthusiasm and glowing longing for the

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[14] On the Gnostics see my chapter 3 in *Crises in the Early Church* (1912).

[15] *Gesch, des Montanismus*, 1881, p. 76. See also Faulkner, *Crises in Early Church*, ch. 4.

Coming of the kingdom of God in its glory,[16] and against repetition of marriage refers to what the apostle says as to such in *extremitatibus saeculi.*[17] The End of the world by the near Coming of Christ was universal church-faith. We meet it often enough, for instance, in such a churchman as Cyprian."[18] But to be told in 155 that Christ was to appear in the near future on Mount Pepuza in Phrygia, and that all the ordinary indulgences which Christians had been allowing themselves in view of the delay of the Coming since Christ's return to heaven about one hundred and twenty years before must be dispensed with—this, I say, was something the regular church, which was composing herself for still further delay of the Lord, did not relish. The strict fasts, the prominence of female prophets, and other accessories of Montanism, strengthened this repugnance and helped the disappearance of premillenarianism.

(5) The philosophical cast of Christianity in Alexandria and its more spiritual views gave chiliasm its solar plexus blow. Clement of Alexandria never refers to it, but Origen, the most brilliant and learned Father up to his time (active as writer 215-253), pays his compliments to it. He describes in detail the carnal expectations of the premillenarians, which he says are due to taking scripture literally, which should be taken figuratively, "understanding the Scriptures in a sort of Jewish sense, unworthy of the divine promises."[19] Of course, by and by this world and all material things will pass away; God will stand in the assembly of the gods; and the old original unity of all spirits with their eternal Author, where all acknowledge the Father as they do the Son, all spirits alike at first—that old unity is restored.

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[16] *de Orat.* 5.

[17] *ad Uxor.* 1, 2.

[18] Bonwetsch, *lib. cit.*, p. 77. Word Catholic refers to the regular church opposed to so-called heretical or separate bodies ("sects").

[19] *Princ.*, 2.11, 2.

That is the final end and object of all things, what it was at the beginning, an end which, however, creates ever new beginnings out of itself, and a beginning which ever again attains to its final end or object.[20] Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, pupil of Origen, carried on his master's work, but Nepos, a bishop in Egypt, perhaps aroused by the terrors of the Decian persecution, came out strongly for premillenarianism. He said the Messianic passages of the prophets and the portrayals of the prophets must be taken literally. It is not to be doubted that this view gave many strong motives to brave endurances in the persecution. After the latter ceased, Dionysius both by writing and preaching tried to overthrow the error of Nepos. But at least this aspect of Origen's teaching took more and more hold on the East, and finally almost drove out the view we have traced.

This was not so in the West, where Origen was not much known. Here the fascinating dreams of chiliasm had more or less vogue till the conversion of Constantine and the empire (say 324). Lactantius gave a glowing account of the millennial kingdom, which in sensuousness overtopped anything previous. The citizens of this kingdom shall beget innumerable children for the Lord, and he entertains himself with the view that the heathen will not all be exterminated, but a part will be left to adorn the triumph of the saints, who will use them forever as slaves.[21]

(6) Premillenarianism was finished by the so-called conversion of the Roman Empire. With the ceasing of persecution vanished also the charm of these sensuous expectations; and after the empire became Christian, or at least accepted Christianity as at first *a* state religion and then as *the* state religion, there was naturally lost

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[20] Redepenning, *Origenes*, 1846, ii, p. 451.

[21] *Inst. Div.*, 7, 14ff.

the interest with which the overthrow of that empire by the Return of the Lord was expected.[22] Then the church went back to the real teaching of the New Testament—at least in its main drift—that the Lord is to come at the end of the world, not to set up his kingdom in Jerusalem or New York, but for the final Judgment and the winding up of his mediatorial kingdom. No doubt this view was cherished by some all along, but so far as literary expression was concerned premillennialism held the field for a couple of centuries. Yes, the Coming for the earthly kingdom by the Return of the Lord was a living hope of early Christianity.

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[22] See Gieseler, *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 238. Compare Hagenbach: "It was very natural that Christianity should confidently expect a longer existence on earth, after it had become the religion of the state, and been permanently established. Thus the period of Christ's second coming, and of the destruction of the world, was inevitably deferred from time to time, and it was only extraordinary events that caused men for a season to look forward to these things as nigh at hand."—*History of Doctrines*, Edinb. ed. ii, p. 87.

CHAPTER VII

IS THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PAPACY SOUND?

If we take the papacy as in any way the product of Christianity, we may say that so far as institutions go it is the greatest creation of the Christian religion. For eleven hundred years it ruled the Christian world, for fifteen hundred years it has been a tremendous power, and now, nineteen hundred years after Christianity started, it is still vigorous, holding in its grip millions of subjects in all parts of the world. The papacy has come down through the centuries, without the same power that she had in the Middle Ages, but with large remnants of it, her spiritual vigor still almost unimpaired, assured that next Sunday whosesoever pastor's parishioners do not go to church, hers will go; whatever theology is changing and vanishing, hers is almost the same as the Council of Trent left it in 1563; and she will still have her seat on the Seven Hills in the year 2130, and her ramifications in every country where she now exists, with perhaps many new lands added to her domain. In this year of grace she faces the future calm and unafraid, because without a disintegrating theology, without ever-changing religious values, she is sure of her creed because she thinks she is sure of her Lord. I speak simply historically. If you would ask papal theologians the secret of their confidence in the future, of their assurance that in 2500 they would still be offering the body of Christ in the mass, they would give many answers, but they would all unite in one: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

And, without intending it, this is a wise reply on their part, because the papalist is strong in faith, but weak in history. I don't mean their historians and theologians have not convinced themselves that they have good historical foundations; but it is incontestable that their wiser and more impartial students have been compelled to abandon their former convictions, revise their historical judgments, and either leave their church, or remain in it disillusioned, or be excommunicated from it—and this last simply because they have gotten, not new theological light, not new religious light, but new historical light. For the papacy has had the frankness and honesty to put the historical reasons on the level with the theological. She has said that the Bishop of Rome is religiously not only the only vicar of Christ on earth, the head and teacher of all Christians, whom all must receive as such in order to be Christians, but she has said that the early and the later church, till what they call the Greek schism, and all the Western church till the Reformation, believed this. Now, you might persuade yourself by some false philosophy that there ought to be some one head of the church on earth, some one earthly ruler, and you might persuade yourself by some false exegesis that our Lord intended that in the "Rock" passage of Matthew and the "Feed my lambs" passage of John, but you would find hard sledding the moment you left philosophy and exegesis for history.

What, then, is historically the papal claim?

(1) That the Bishop, or Pope of Rome (not called Pope or Father pre-eminently till the eighth century), is the chief ecclesiastical ruler of the universal church.

(2) That to him all appeals must therefore be made and by him decided.

(3) That he is the ordinary in every diocese in Christendom; that is, has actual episcopal jurisdiction everywhere, in case of necessity can supersede every bishop,

either by displacing him, or temporarily putting him aside, or rescinding or nullifying his acts.

(4) That he is the arbiter in the doctrinal and moral teachings of the church, kept from error by the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit himself.

These are the claims. But they go far beyond what you and I might call the fair claims, and which we find in our historical search. What, then, are the claims which the church might legitimately make?

(1) That Peter was once in Rome and died there.

(2) That this, with the fact that Paul was also there, made Rome an apostolic seat, and the fact that both died there, and thus consecrated that ground as sacred, made it an apostolic seat ("see") pre-eminently.

(3) That this pre-eminence passed over naturally to the church or churches in that city, and, when there came to be a bishop there (as chief presbyter very early—perhaps 80 A. D.—as bishop in the ordinary or later sense perhaps 140 or 150; there is evidence that the so-called monarchical episcopate was later in Rome than in the cities of Asia Minor), of course to the bishop there.

(4) That this tragic halo which invested the church in Rome with high honor would be lovingly and even enthusiastically recognized by churches everywhere, especially as all Orientals and many Westerners were apt to speak in lavish extravagance of courtesy. But it would be foolish to take these tropical praises as legal expressions in matters of jurisdiction. Here facts only must rule.

(5) The honor of apostolic teachers and martyrs so eminent as Peter and Paul was heightened by the benefactions of the churches in Rome. There were some rich people among the converts there; in fact, we know that Christianity had pressed into the very purlieus of the imperial court itself, and even farther than the purlieus. It had eminent representatives. In the economic crises

of the empire, and in the fearful devastations and persecutions which befell the Christians, relief came as a heavenly gift from the churches in the imperial city, and these gifts reflected as with divine honor upon the church and bishops whence they came. It is undeniable that the benevolence of Rome helped her primacy.

(6) We all know that the relative position of cities in the empire had a large part, sometimes the chief, in determining their ecclesiastical status. We should naturally suppose that in Christianity religious considerations might overbalance political in fixing rank; though deeper thought would tell us that the question of rank is not Christian at all. But by the third century the Christian Church was a rather mixed affair—Christian, Jewish, heathen. And its hierarchy as such was Jewish and heathen only, however much individual hierarchs had of Christian life and ideals. Religious considerations would make us feel that Jerusalem, where Christ lived, died, and rose again, where the first church was founded, should be the chief church in Christendom. But so little did such considerations weigh that the Bishop of Jerusalem was under the metropolitan of Cæsarea, who was himself under the patriarch of Antioch. What was the second city in rank in the empire according to imperial reckoning? Alexandria. Who was the second bishop or archbishop in rank in the empire? He of Alexandria. Which was the third city in rank? Antioch. Peter resided there, Paul visited there, and it thus had illustrious religious associations, but its bishop was third in rank—not second, not first. Which was the fourth city of the empire, according to the secular order? Ephesus. Here, too, were abundant sacred ties to make Ephesus the first see of Christendom. The two greatest of the apostles, John and Paul, lived for years in it, and perhaps Peter too visited it. But was it first? No, only fourth. It is certain, therefore, that the relative secular

position of the cities in the Roman Empire had a good deal to do with their ecclesiastical position. And since Rome was the capital of the empire, her bishop was bound to be the first in the empire, whatever religious considerations did or did not help along that primacy. Secular standing was a mighty factor in church matters.

There were higher reasons than political to exalt Rome.

(1) Rome early attained pre-eminence for the number of her martyrs. In the very center whence edicts of persecution went forth she was naturally the first struck and the hardest struck. Being the strongest church numerically, she also became the church which sent up the shining way the most heroes and heroines. This invested her with unique moral importance.

(2) I have already spoken of the fact that both Peter and Paul passed their last year or years in Rome, and were martyred there, which added mightily to the spiritual reputation of the bishops who in the last part of the second, in the third, and following centuries, were looked upon as their successors—their successors legally as bishops and in the glamour and glory of their fame as apostles and martyrs. (It is true that some doubt or even deny that Peter was ever in Rome. But this is a hardy skepticism. I think practically all scientific church historians of the last part of the nineteenth and of the twentieth century hold that he was either certainly or probably there.)

(3) Our Lord's famous words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," were looked upon as investing Peter with a kind of primacy, to say the least, and also the church where he died, and much later the church where he came to be (falsely) looked upon as the first bishop. That left a beautiful territory of indefiniteness for the papal claim. If you are a modest Roman bishop, you would not take too much to yourself

for Christ's words to Peter; if you are a Victor or a Leo, you would stretch the claim to the utmost, and look upon yourself as the lord and master of all bishops, the head of the church on earth, perhaps the very vicar of Christ —claims which we know Peter himself was as innocent of as a newborn babe. These were the religious reasons for the rise of the papacy.

As to the sounding phrase, "The Apostolic See," often used by papal writers of the Roman bishopric, we must remember that the place where both Paul and Peter gave their lives, Rome, might at times be called by courtesy in the pious parlance of later centuries the apostolic see. But we must remember that Latin has no article (unlike Greek, English, French, and German), and therefore no way except the context to distinguish between definite and indefinite. Therefore, when Latin writers say *sedes apostolica* we do not know whether they mean *the* apostolic see or *an* apostolic see. Where apostles dwelt or preached was an apostolic see. Thus Tertullian says (199 or 200): "Cast a glance over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places. . . . Achaia is very near you, in which you find Corinth. . . . You have Philippi. . . . You have the Thessalonians. Since you are able to cross to Asia you find Ephesus. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have Rome."[1] Saint Paulinus of Nola (died 431) used "apostolic see" to denote a bishop with no apostolic connection, as of Tagaste.[2] We get the definite article prefixed in the General Council (Constantinople, 381), but it is of Antioch, "the most ancient and truly apostolic Church of Antioch of Syria."[3] Roman writers are apt to translate *sedes apostolica* when it refers to Rome as *the* apostolic see, which is giving themselves the benefit of the doubt in fine style.

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[1] *De Praes.. Haer.*, 36

[2] Ep. 3, 1; 18. 6.

[3] Theod. 5, 9; *Petrine Claims*, Littledale, p. 103.

Let us then examine the historical foundations of the papal monarchy.

(1) As to the New Testament, if the Roman claim is well founded, we should find that all theological and moral questions are put up to Peter alone; he should decide whether Gentiles are to be circumcised or whether Paul is to go to the Gentiles; he should write the theological Epistles like Romans, Galatians, and Colossians; he should be sole arbiter in that seething infant church, when everything was in flux, yet everything in process of being settled. So far is this from being true, that—although, according to his temperament, he took the leading rôle at the very start—no question was referred to him alone; a council was called to decide about the Gentiles, where James, the Lord's brother, had the decisive voice (so far as any one had); the doctrinal points were laid to rest by Paul and (against Gnosticism) by John; and in Peter's own writings no trace whatever exists of the lordly assumptions that sound through the papal decrees and letters. If Peter was Pope, he is quite ignorant of it, and his contemporaries are as ignorant of it as he.

(2) The first writer who has to do with Rome after the close of the New Testament is Clement, "bishop" or head presbyter of the church there, who writes a letter in 97 A. D. to the Church in Corinth to exhort her to peace and love. It would have been a fine opportunity to show that he is Pope indeed. But how different the situation! (*a*) The Corinthian church had not referred their troubles to him. (*b*) He writes, not in his own name, as is the custom with Popes, but in the name of the church alone. "The Church of God which sojourneth in Rome to the Church of God which sojourneth in Corinth, to them which are called and sanctified by the will of God through

our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace from Almighty God through Jesus Christ be multiplied." (*c*) The letter is exactly such as might be written by any pious and earnest person to a church which had been torn by divisions. There is a passage which a papalist might twist to his purpose, but when understood in the context is innocent. The writer had been quoting Scripture to show that those who disobey God are punished, and he adds: "But if certain persons should be disobedient unto the words spoken by him [God in Scripture] through us [as we have been quoting the Scripture], let them understand that they will entangle themselves in no slight transgression and danger; but we shall be guiltless of this sin"[4] (because we have warned you and given you the words of Scripture). Any preacher could use the words of Clement here. There is no echo of prelatic power or papal authority in the letter. If the writer were Pope in the papal sense, he entirely conceals it. But if he were really Pope, and could write a letter such as this without revealing it, that is a greater wonder than the papacy itself.

(3) About 110-117 A. D. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, writes to the Roman Church. He was on his way to martyrdom in Rome, and somewhere in Asia Minor he sent off a letter to the Roman brethren. This letter is also oblivious of the papacy. Not even the episcopate is mentioned, let alone the papacy, which is another evidence that early in the second century the so-called monarchical episcopate (bishop as church ruler or officer as distinct from elder or presiding presbyter) did not exist in Rome.

> Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, unto her that hath found mercy in the bountifulness of the Father most High and of Jesus Christ his only Son; to the church that is beloved and enlightened through the will of Him who willed all things that are,

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[4] Clement, *ad Corinth*, 59.

> by faith and love toward Jesus Christ our God; even unto her that hath the presidency in the country of the regions of the Romans [that is, the Church in the city of Rome naturally took precedence in any meeting of the representatives of the churches in that part of the country], being worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of felicitation, worthy of purity, and having the presidency of love [perhaps referring to the generous beneficence of the Church in the capital to needy brethren elsewhere], walking in the law of Christ and bearing the Father's name; which church I also salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father; unto them that in flesh and spirit are united unto his every commandment, being filled with the grace of God without wavering, and filtered clear from every stain—abundant greeting in Jesus Christ our God in blamelessness.[5]

This is a lovely introduction, breathing the deep piety of the holy and enthusiastic martyr-bishop of Antioch; but, so far as showing that the church to which he is writing is the ruling church in the world, it is null and void. Nor does it address the bishop at all, as on the theory of the papacy it must do. The words of Ignatius show that there was a church in Rome, that it was the chief church in Italy, that it was known for its love and faith, but that is all. If the papacy existed in 117, as it did on the modern Roman theory, Ignatius is as ignorant of it as Clement twenty years before.

(4) About 140 A. D. a writing appeared in Rome written by Hermas, a brother of Pius, the bishop, or head presbyter, of Rome. It is quite an extensive piece, and has information on the moral and religious condition of Christians, the building of the church, etc. It is "rich in concrete examples, and is a mine of information as to the life and customs of the Roman Church in the beginning of the second century."[6] The condition it reveals calls for intervention of the Pope with all his power, if the papacy was then heard of. But, alas! he is not existent. Even the fully developed episcopate as we

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[5] Ignatius, *ad Rom.*, Introduction, Lightfoot's transl.

[6] Krüger, *History of Early Christian Literature*, transl., 1897, p. 44.

know it from history (say 150 or 175) is also absent, and the equality of bishops and presbyters is still in full vigor. In fact, this feeble and yet, in its own way, interesting *Pilgrim's Progress* of the early church is certain proof that the monarchical episcopate was much later in Rome than in Asia Minor. There was no papacy in Rome at 140.

(5) The next item of evidence is the conference between Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, on the time of observing Easter, 155-166. We can hardly understand the tremendous interest that that question excited in the second century. This was the situation: the Eastern Churches, following (they said) the custom of the apostle John and the other apostles, observed the fourteenth day of Nisan as Passover or Easter —observing on it (when they did observe it) both the death and the resurrection of Christ; fasting up to three in the afternoon, when rejoicing followed. The Westerners, on the other hand celebrated the Friday which came after the fourteenth Nisan as the day of the death of Jesus, and the Sunday following that as the day of his resurrection. Polycarp journeyed all the way to Rome to talk over that question—not summoned, but going on his own impulse—and tried to win over his Roman brother. Did the latter lay down the law to the Easterner? Did he demand submission? If he had been the Pope in the modern sense, he would have issued a decree ordering all churches to follow the Western custom. Both tried to persuade the other; neither succeeded; both parted in love.[7] Ah, if all the later Popes had been like Anicetus! The only argument Anicetus advanced was the example of his predecessors, whom he calls, not bishops, but elders.

(6) About thirty-five years pass away, and we get a Bishop of Rome who feels his power and is determined

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[7] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, 5. 24.

to bring the Easterners "to time." This was Victor, and he made a kind of mild beginning of the papacy (about 189-200, exact date uncertain). As bishop of the capital city of the empire he wrote to the Eastern bishops asking them to hold synods to discuss the matter of Easter with a view to adopting the Roman time. Even he did not himself command the new observance. But in some parts of the church, even in the East, the moral or other influence of Victor prevailed, and the traditional way of the East was given up. But not in Asia and neighboring provinces (by Asia is meant the province so called). The Bishop of Ephesus, Polycrates, representing these bishops, wrote to the Roman Church defending their customs received from the apostles, and intimated that the half threat which Victor had sent to them, that if they persisted he would cut them off from communion with the Roman Church, would not cause them to change. "I am not scared by those who intimidate us, for they who are greater than I have said, We ought to obey God rather than men."[8] This greatly displeased Victor, and he immediately cut off the Asian churches from the Church of Rome.[9] This was a high-handed and unchristian proceeding, as the Eastern churches were following only their own immemorial customs, and the matter was one of no importance whatever—I mean of no doctrinal bearing. At any rate, the bishops paid no attention to Victor's excommunication; in fact, they upbraided him for it; and so holy and wise a bishop as Irenæus of Lyons, in Gaul, where the Roman observance was in vogue, wrote to Victor inveighing against him for his foolish and unwarranted act.[10] The Asian Churches still kept up their old practice; the excommunication by Victor was not heeded by any other churches, East or

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[8] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, 5. 21.

[9] *Ibid.*, 5. 24.

[10] Eusebius 5. 24; Socrates, *H. E.*, 5. 22, 16.

West, and everything went on as before. (Apparently about 255 the Asian churches were still observing their former practice,[11] though by 325 the Western mode had everywhere prevailed.) At any rate, the Victor incident shows us that at the end of the second century the universal church recognized no Pope of Rome in the papal sense.

(7) We have the famous passage of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, about 180, which Romans have made much of on account of its apparent support of the papacy. He is refuting the Gnostics, who, over against the Scripture brought against them, alleged that they have a secret tradition from these very apostles who wrote the New Testament indorsing their doctrine. Irenæus replies that this cannot be, inasmuch as—independent of the New Testament—we have churches now existing founded by apostles, which churches knew their teaching, and the bishops of these churches have handed down that teaching, which they and everybody else near them know is notoriously different from the Gnostic. Let me quote his words:

> It is within power of all who wish to see the truth to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested through the world in every church; and we are able to enumerate those whom the apostles appointed to be bishops in the churches, and their successors, quite down to our own time; who neither taught, nor knew anything like what these [Gnostics] rave about. [We know that the apostles did occasionally—not always—recommend that elders should be appointed in churches. Irenæus uses the word "bishops," but not strictly, as he calls them presbyters (elders) in the context, where he speaks of the "tradition which comes from the apostles and which is guarded by the succession of presbyters in the churches."] Yet, surely, if the apostles had known any hidden mysteries which they were in the habit of teaching to the perfect, apart and privily from the rest, they would have taken special care to deliver them to those to whom they were also committing the churches; . . . but because it

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[11] Firmilian in Cypr., *Ep.* 75 (74), 6.

> would be too long in such a volume as this to enumerate the succession of all the churches, we point to the tradition of that very great and very ancient and universally known church which was founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul [we know from New Testament history that neither Peter nor Paul founded the Roman Church; but by 180 their names were universally associated with it, and in the general language of Irenæus, not designed to be accurate in the modern sense, he could speak of them rhetorically as founders and establishers]; we point, I say, to the tradition which this church had from the apostles, and to her faith proclaimed to men, which comes down to our time through the succession of her bishops. And so we put to confusion all those who in any way, either on account of self-pleasing, or of vainglory, or of blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings. For to this church, on account of its more potent pre-eminence [or, its more potent principality], it is necessary that every church should resort, that is to say, the faithful from everywhere; in which church the tradition which comes from the apostles has ever been preserved by those from everywhere.[12]

That is, when you cannot refute the Gnostics by the Bible because they have their own secret interpretation of the Bible, which makes it of none effect, nor by the apostles because they have their own alleged private source of what the apostles taught, refer them to the well-known churches founded by apostles or those associated with them, because the public teachers of those churches have reliable information as to what apostles taught. But if it is not handy to go to such a church in your own province, why, there is the church in the capital of the empire, where everybody goes because it is the capital, and because the church there had the more potent principality, being the church of the imperial city and also consecrated with the last witness of the celebrated apostles Peter and Paul. So many people resort there that they bring with them the testimony of their churches from all over the empire, and so constantly correct and inform the tradition in Rome. This makes Rome the handiest and most reliable source of traditional instruction. Irenæus does not say that Christ made Rome the sole infallible teacher and ruler of all the churches, that that was its more potent principality; but that on account of its being the church of the apostles and of the principate (empire), and thus thronged by Christians from everywhere, it is the readiest and safest to give information as to what is truly apostolic. This is the famous passage of Irenæus, and this is its meaning. By 180, then, so far as we know, the papacy, as Roman doctrine defines it, had not arisen. The bridge of the papacy spans a wide chasm, but since it comes short by a hundred years of the apostolic shore its historic invalidity is as great as though it never existed at all. And we have come down only as far as Irenæus.

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[12] Irenæus, *Contra Haereses* 3. 3, 1, 2. Irenæus wrote in Greek, but the last part of this passage is preserved only in a later Latin translation. For history of interpretation see Precht, *Die Begründung des römischen Primates . . . nach Irenæus*, 1923, and Bonwetsch *Die Theologie des Irenæus*, 1925, pp. 119–125. The best discussion in English is Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, 3 ed., revised and enlarged 1900, pp. 12-35.

CHAPTER VIII

IS THE HISTORIC EPISCOPATE HISTORIC?

THE term "historic episcopate" was first used in the celebrated proposals for church union sent forth by the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in connection with the triennial General Convention of that Church held in Chicago in 1886. The exact words of this platform are worth quoting:

> We desire to express our desire and readiness to enter into brotherly conference with all or any Christian bodies [word "church" retained for bodies having the episcopate] seeking the restoration of the organic unity of the church, with a view to the earnest study of the conditions under which so priceless a blessing might happily be brought to pass. [As minimum conditions the following were proposed.] The Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith; the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith; the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by him; the historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his church.

This now famous Quadrilateral was reaffirmed by the Lambeth Conference of 1888 (that is, a meeting of all the bishops of the Anglican and related communions throughout the world), and of all the later Lambeth Conferences till 1920, when it was also reaffirmed, though with important concessions—which did not, however, change its essence. The question naturally turned on the meaning of the words "historic episcopate" as held by the Greek, Roman, Oriental, and Anglican Churches. Did it mean the episcopal supervision of a third ministerial office as held by the Moravian, Lutheran, Methodist Episcopal, and other churches? Did it mean the presbyterial pastoral episcopate, as held by the presbyterially constituted churches, like Presbyterian, Methodist, and other churches? Or did it mean the episcopate as represented by the pastor, and co-ordinate with, or under, the whole body of believers, with or without the consenting and advising bond of all sister churches? Here are four kinds of episcopate, all represented in history and therefore all historic. (I have not mentioned a fifth, namely, the monarchical episcopate as mounting up into the papacy, by which alone it finds its sanction and control, its justification and necessary limitation.)

The meaning of the words "historic episcopate" was, then, the first thing in order. It soon came out from authoritative sources that the term applied to that form of episcopate which the Protestant Episcopal Church herself had—that is, the so-called monarchical episcopate, of a distinct and higher order than presbyters, without which there could be no church, for without ordination of deacons and presbyters by these bishops there could be no ministry.[1] The last article of the Quadrilateral, therefore, meant that all Protestant churches had no standing as churches; that, however religiously valid, they were ecclesiastically invalid; and that no church union could be thought of until Protestant clergy were reordained by Protestant Episcopal bishops.

We shall not stop to point to the arrogance of appropriating the word "historic" to only one type of the five different kinds of episcopate, each one of which can fairly claim a long possession of a part of the historic field. Leaving that, it only remains to ask, Has the monarchical third-order episcopate been the only episcopate known in all ages, or if not the only one, yet so generally and universally known in all ages that it can be called historic *par excellence, the* historic episcopate?

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[1] I leave out of consideration the claim of the Roman Church that the episcopate of Anglicanism is also invalid, a claim set forth in the famous bull Apostolicæ Curæ of Leo XIII, 1896, and which the whole historic attitude of the Greek Church indorses, though I think, without official pronouncement. When Episcopal minister Ingram was converted to the Greek Church he was reordained. However, much to the relief of our Episcopal brethren, a local synod of the Greek Church in Constantinople in 1927 passed a resolution indorsing as valid the ministry of the Anglican Church. This does not bind the Greek Church as such, nor authoritatively change her attitude. For the important part of the bull of 1896 see Mirbt, *Quellen zur Gesch. des Papsttums*, 3 Aufl., no. 359, pp. 390–91.

1. It did not exist in the apostolic age, which is certainly an interesting segment of history. We have, indeed, oversight by apostles, pastors, elders, though always in connection with each other and with "the brethren" (the later so-called laity), never as one class over another. We do not, for instance, have oversight of bishops over elders and over churches, as in the modern episcopate. And there is no more "assured result" of New Testament study than that bishops in the New Testament are synonymous with elders or presbyters. Comparison of Acts 20. 17 with verse 28, 1 Tim. 3. 1, 2 with 4. 14 and 5. 1 and 17 (remembering that the writer describes only two classes of church officers, bishops [=elders; see 5. 1, 17] and deacons), and Titus 1. 5 with verse 7, will show that elder and bishop are substantially or entirely identical; that they were one and the same, or vanished into each other across invisible lines. This is so evident that I think there is no historical scholar in the world, who has regard for reality, who denies this result. Even the more impartial Roman and Anglican Catholics do not deny it. There is nothing plainer on the face of the New Testament than that there was no hierarchy there, no separate bishops lording it over God's heritage; that even the apostles did not act as rulers in the later ecclesiastical sense.[2] A part of our difficulty comes from the false translations of the King James

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[2] An able discussion of this is by Professor Witherow, in *Presbyterian Review* (N. Y.) April, 1887, 238ff.

Version, which disappear when once you turn to the Greek. The word "ordination" in its later meaning, for instance, vanishes from the New Testament. The idea of turning a layman into a clergyman by a special consecration did not exist in the New Testament, nor did the laying on of hands have the modern meaning. It was the Jewish symbol of blessing and of prayer, and might be the accompaniment of any mission or journey. The word "rule" will also go as referring to ministers. The idea was absolutely forbidden by Christ, and when you look into your Greek Testament you will find a thought not quite so monarchical. For instance, instead of reading, "Obey them that have the rule over you," you will read, "Be persuaded by those who lead you." But you say, "Could the King James Version be so unreliable?" Oh, yes. In fact, it was made under conditions which, in this field at least, rendered a true translation impossible. The translators were ordered to keep all the ecclesiastical terms, and make no changes in the customary church words. I do not say that James or the translators consciously "doctored" the English text to deceive, but their result was exactly that. Fortunately, the most of that is done away in the Revised Version, especially in the American Standard Revision, though not all. In any case, a section of history not to be despised—the apostolic age—was without the monarchical episcopate. So far it is not historic. On the other hand, nobody denies that there were elders in that age, who were overseers in the sense of having duties now administrative, now judicial, now teaching or preaching, and who were therefore the genuine forerunners of our ministers. So far the presbyterial ministry is historic.

2. The first witness after the apostles is Clement of Rome, 97, in the Epistle of the Church in Rome to the Church in Corinth. The latter church had deposed their

ministry, apparently on account of an eruption of the younger men against the older (in former times "ye rendered to the older men among you the honor which is their due," sec. 1). The holy and benevolent Clement argues against this, says that everything should be done in order and seemliness, ministers should not be deposed without cause, and cites numerous Old Testament examples of insubordination, or punishment for it, of exhortations to peace and amity, speaks of the fact that the apostles did not appoint ministers in a helter-skelter way, but in decent order, etc. Incidentally, he gives proof that at 97 or 98, whether at Rome or Corinth, the episcopate had not developed into the later third-order monarchical stage. Bishops are still synonymous with elders or presbyters. "So, preaching everywhere in country and town, they [apostles] appointed their first-fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe. And this they did in no new fashion; for, indeed, it had been written concerning bishops and deacons from very ancient times; for thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith," Isa. 60. 17 (42). In section 44 you will see that bishops are used synonymously with presbyters or elders:

> And our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office [he uses the word "name" here in the Oriental sense of the thing itself]. For this cause, therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterward they provided a continuance, that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration. Those, therefore, that were appointed by them, or afterward by other men of repute with the consent of the whole church, and have ministered unblameably to the flock of Christ in lowliness of mind, peacefully and with all modesty, and for long time have borne a good report with all—these men we consider to be unjustly thrust out from their administration. For it will be no

> light sin for us if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office unblameably and holily. Blessed are those presbyters who have gone before [referring to the same officers, namely, those who had died previous to these disturbances in Corinth], seeing that their departure was fruitful and ripe; for they have no fear lest any one should remove them from their appointed place. For we see ye have displaced certain persons, though they have lived honorably, from the ministration which had been respected by them blamelessly (44, Lightfoot's translation).

Here it is evident that "presbyters" and "bishops" are used synonymously, as in the New Testament. So in section 47 ("reported that the very steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians maketh sedition against its presbyters") 54 ("let the flock of Christ be at peace with its duly appointed presbyters"), 57 ("ye that laid the foundation of the sedition, submit yourselves unto the presbyters"), and 63 ("take our side with them that are leaders of our souls").

3. Let us now turn back from Rome and Corinth to Asia Minor, and turn forward ten or twenty years to about 117. In the towns or little cities of Asia Minor things went more rapidly, as they do in America. They were a restless and nervous population; the whole country was seething with new ideas, stirred by itinerant prophets of new cults, and some of these preachers and wandering fakirs were none too pure in conduct, so that both the religious and moral life of the Christians was in danger of dissolution, a danger based in the first instance on the doctrinal slipperiness of the Gnostic, Isic, and other Oriental teachers. For this reason the church leaders saw that organization must be made tighter, the reins of control kept tauter, and more responsibility placed on approved men. Certain elders, therefore, who had shown themselves competent for effective administration, perhaps able presidents of the elders or of church meetings, were little by little advanced to positions of

special oversight, until about 110-117 they were distinguished from elders and called overseers or bishops. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, in his letters to these churches (about 110-117), is so concerned to keep the latter free from being entangled by the Christian Science of those days that he exhorts the members to be sure to keep in with their bishops, whom he distinguishes from presbyters as a third officer (whether a third order there is no light). I cannot quote all the passages, and it is not necessary, as they are all variations of the one theme: Stand by your bishop, obey your bishop. "Be ye zealous to do all things in godly concord, the bishop presiding after the likeness of God and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the apostles, with the deacons who are most dear to me, having been intrusted with the diaconate of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the world and appeared at the end of time. . . . Let there be nothing among you which shall have power to divide you, but be ye united with the bishop; and with them that preside over you as an ensample and lesson of incorruptibility."[3] There is no theory of the bishop's office, no apostolical succession (so far as there is any succession from apostles it belongs to presbyters); the bishop is simply there providentially in God's place, to be the bond of union over against disintegrating doctrines. The author takes the fact of this advanced stage of organization in the Asia churches for granted, uses it to fight the heretics, but says nothing against the previous presbyterial organization as invalid, recognizing that, inasmuch as there are now separate overseers, the presbyters fit in with the bishops as the strings with the harp.

There is an entirely different strain, however, when he writes to the Romans. There the church had not advanced so fast, and bishops as a distinct third office had not been set in. In his letter to the Romans, therefore, there is no mention of bishops. And as the Roman Church was not troubled with the Asiatic itch for now doctrines, there is no exhortation to keep in harmony with their leaders.[4]

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[3] Ign., *ad Magn.*, 6.

4. In the city of Philippi as late as about 150 there is no trace of the bishop in the High sense. We have Polycarp's letter to the brethren there, and he gives to each class of officers the appropriate exhortations. He tells (sec. 5) what class of men the deacons should be, as well as the younger men and the virgins. They should "submit themselves to the presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ" (5), with no mention of bishops. In section 6 he describes the model presbyters in a fine way, a description as true to-day as in 150; but he says nothing of bishops, nor of the duty of presbyters to submit to bishops. The European churches were not as feverish as those of Asia Minor. They made haste slowly. If, then, the germ of the Catholic episcopate was in existence ("historic") in Asia Minor, by, say, 110-117, it was not in Macedonia in Europe in 150.

5. Our search for that high-sounding thing, the historic episcopate, up to 150 has not been very successful. In December, 1883, Bryennios, metropolitan of Nicomedia of the Greek Church, published in Constantinople a precious document which he had discovered in 1873, but had not had time to study and edit till ten years after. In 1884-85 numerous editions appeared in Europe and America, and it soon became one of the best-known documents of the early church. It was the famous *Didache,* or *Teaching of the Apostles.* It treats deliberately though briefly of church rules, officers, sacraments, etc., and therefore is the very book we are looking for. It was written probably in Syria, possibly in Egypt, as it presupposes a land where copious running streams of

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[4] I take for granted the genuineness of Ignatius's Seven Shorter Greek Epistles, in spite of the book of Doctor Killen, *The Epistles of Ignatius Entirely Spurious*, Edinburgh, 1886. The question is not settled, but the weightier reasons are for genuineness.

water were not common (sec. 7). Its date is about 125. It treats of apostles and prophets (11), of those who came in the name of the Lord (12), and of bishops and deacons (15), but not elders. This shows that in its region well along in the second century the office of oversight, as in the primitive church, was called either bishop, as in this territory, or elder, or both, as in apostolic times in Ephesus, or later in Corinth and Rome. "Appoint for yourselves, therefore, bishops and deacons, worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not; for they are your honorable men along with the prophets and teachers" (15). That is all. Apostles are still going on, and not yet absorbed in bishops, as Catholic theory presupposes; prophets and teachers are in honor, and more is said of them; bishops (=elders) and deacons are not ignored, however, but must be respected, though they are dispatched in four or five lines. The so-called historic episcopate is not yet.

6. Between 100 and 140—very likely about 140—appeared what has been called *The Pilgrim's Progress* of the early church, the celebrated Shepherd or Pastor of Hermas, and in Rome. According to Muratorian canon (about 175), its author, Hermas, was the brother of Pius, bishop or head presbyter of Rome (about 140-155). The book had a wide circulation, and was looked upon by some as quasi-canonical. Its light on church organization agrees with what we get from other sources of the late development of the (separate) episcopate in Rome. Names and offices were not yet distinctly differentiated.

> Thou shalt therefore say unto the rulers [leaders, ἡνουμένοις] of the church that they direct their paths in righteousness (*Vis.* 2: 2). The aged woman [the church] came and asked me if I had already given the book to the elders. . . . Thou shalt send one [book] to Clement [probably the head presbyter] and one

to Grapte [probably a deacon]. So Clement shall send to the foreign cities, for this is his duty; while Grapte shall instruct the widows and orphans. But thou [Hermas, a layman] read (the book) to this city along with the elders who preside over the church (2: 4). The stones that are squared and white and fit together in their joints are apostles and bishops and teachers and deacons, who walked after the holiness of God, and exercised their office of bishop and teacher and deacon in purity and sanctity (3. 5). [Here bishops are plainly the same as the "elders who preside over the church" of the other passage.] I say unto you that are rulers [literally, leaders] of the church and that occupy the chief seats (3. 9). [For description of the prophet see *Mand.* 11.] Apostles and teachers who preached unto the whole world, and who taught the word of the Lord in soberness and purity, and kept back no part at all for evil desire, but walked always in righteousness and truth, even as they also received the Holy Spirit. Such, therefore, shall have their entrance with the angels (*Sim.* 9. 25). Bishops, hospitable persons, who gladly received unto their houses at all times the servants of God without hypocrisy (9. 27).

It is evident, then, that in Rome (probably 140) we have as yet no developed or High Church episcopate. Prophets and apostles are still going forth; the leaders are called elders or bishops indiscriminately, or simply "leading ones," and the whole situation is congruous with the inchoate organization of early times, but thoroughly incongruous with the third-order organization of 250.

7. Justin Martyr, the philosophical Christian, whose writings are inestimable (1 *Apol.* about 138-39, 2 *Apol.* about 160, *Dial. with Trypho* about 150), gives us the same impression as the second-century writers already mentioned, namely, that church polity had not yet settled down to the Catholic High form, to the monarchical episcopate. In the Eucharist the bread, cup of water, and krama are brought "to the president of the brethren" (1 *Apol.* 65), not officially called bishop yet (as a well-known designation to heathen, as it later became), who "verbally instructs and offers prayers and thanksgivings,"

a portion of the food being sent to the absent by deacons. By the year 250 the bishop was such a well-known character that every heathen knew that he was the chief officer in the church; but by 150, when Justin wrote, though there were officers distinct from presbyters in some churches, the bishop could hardly have been known outside of Christian circles, as Justin has to use a general expression—president of the brethren—in writing a book intended for heathen readers. The bishop was a new officer.

8. We close with the important testimony of Irenæus. He was born perhaps about 115 in the province of Asia, was the pupil of Polycarp and other subapostolic men there, probably accompanied his master, Polycarp, on his journey to Rome between 150 and 160, remained in Rome for some time as a Christian teacher, then went to Gaul, returned to Rome on an embassy in 177, succeeded Pothinus about 178 as Bishop of Lyons, and died after 190. His great work, *Against Heresies* ("Exposure and Refutation of Falsely-Called Science"—or knowledge) was written between 180 and 189, and by that time the episcopate had become historic in the sense of a separate office, though not without echoes and survivals of the long evolution in which it was historic only in germ.

Irenæus was anxious to get some other test than Scripture to refute the Gnostics, since they had their own interpretation of Scripture, and, besides, made it void by claiming a secret tradition from the apostles. To accomplish this he refers to the tradition of apostolic teaching handed down in the apostolic sees (bishoprics which he takes as established directly or indirectly by apostles), testified to by the bishops of those sees. The testimonies of these bishops are a secondary source of genuine Christian teaching as witnessed to by apostles, the primary being Scripture. This succession of bishops rests upon the apostles, as they started it, though he does not say that such a succession is necessary to the ministry. But it has existed, and it is a guarantee of the correctness of the church's teaching, as over against Gnosticism.

> Hyginus, who held the ninth place in Rome in the episcopal succession from the apostles downward (1. 27, 1). It is within the power of all, therefore, in every church who may wish to see the truth to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world. And we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the churches, and the succession of these men to our times: those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these (Gnostics) rave about (3. 3, 1). The faith preached to men which comes down to our time by means of the successions of bishops (3. 3, 2). [Polycarp . . . "was appointed by apostles in Asia bishop of the Church in Smyrna" (3. 3, 4). Polycarp was martyred in 155 or 166 (date disputed), but if we assume he was bishop or head presbyter for forty years—a large assumption, as it was customary to elect as chief officers in the church men of advanced age—115 or 126 would be far too late to be appointed by the last of the apostles, John, who probably died about the years 85-95.] Now, all these [Gnostics] are of much later date than the bishops to whom the apostles committed the churches (5. 20. 1).

Although we know that, following Jewish custom, the apostles wanted the churches to elect elders, and although Paul desired elders (= bishops) to be elected in Crete, it is a far cry from that to the statement of Irenæus that the apostles committed the churches to bishops. That is gratuitous, except in the sense that the apostles favored decent oversight. As to a succession of bishops, no doubt when one officer died another was elected, but a succession of officers as guaranteeing validity of ordination ("apostolic succession") was unknown in the early church. Besides, the lists of bishops contain omissions, and are of no critical value, though from the close of the second century those lists were in churches.[5]

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[5] See Lipsius, *Chronologie der römischen Bischofe*, 1869.

We can say, therefore, that in 180-190, bishops as a distinct office (whether as a distinct order is another question) existed throughout the Roman Empire, though Irenæus also bears unconscious witness that ten years or so before the third century the evolution had not gone on so far as to extinguish the memory of the older time, when presbyters or elders were the same as bishops, or, to put it in other words, when the presiding minister was a presbyter.

> When we refer them [Gnostics] to that tradition which originates from the apostles, which is preserved by means of a succession of presbyters in the churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth (3. 2, 2). Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate (or oversight), have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father (4. 26, 2). Those, however, who are believed to be presbyters by many, but serve their own lusts, . . . and are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat (4. 26, 3). Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the church [he had spoken in the previous section of the "bishops to whom the apostles committed the churches"] call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters (4. 20, 2).[6]

We cannot say, therefore, that the historic episcopate of the Lambeth bishops—the monarchical episcopate of the Greek, Roman, and High Anglican Churches—is historic in the sense intended, that it is in the clear field of history, as ousting the older presbyterial tradition, even up to within hailing distance of the third century.

And we should add that Irenæus' interest in the bishop was chiefly doctrinal, not ecclesiastical, not hierarchical, not priestly. While schism is a sin, "that does not mean as yet the absolute necessity to salvation of belonging to the Great Church. As Irenæus never teaches a priestly mediation of salvation—rather all believers are for him priests (4. 8, 3) and through the Holy Spirit are spiritual men and able to judge all (4. 33, 1), so he does not demand absolute obedience to the episcopate. Only in reference to *doctrine* is subordination to the episcopate which guarantees apostolic truth necessary to salvation. Any special organization of the church does not decide its apostolic character, but the true administration of its teaching [doctrinal] function does decide it (4. 26, 3, 5)."[7] The church as a hierarchy existed in its faint beginnings as early as 180-90. The voice of the bishop as a decisive witness to truth as saving paved the way for his determining position as the center of unity of the church as such. That in its turn for the Western church flowed into the larger stream of the papacy.

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[6] Translation of Roberts, Rambaut, and others, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers.*

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[7] Bonwetsch, *Die Theologie des Irenæus*, pp. 124–25. Seeberg agrees, *Dogmengeschichte*, 3 Aufl. i, 387.

CHAPTER IX

WAS SAINT PATRICK SAINT PATRICK?

OUTSIDE of the apostles and other biblical characters, there is probably not a man who has been canonized by the Catholic Church who is better known to English-speaking readers than Saint Patrick. In every large English-speaking town in the world which contains many Catholics, his day (March 17) is celebrated in some way. But I fear that the universal knowledge extends to little beyond the name, that little being that Patrick was the "apostle of Ireland," and that he "drove the snakes out of Ireland." Even these two points are an emblem of so much that surrounds the name—uncertainty, legend, lies—for he was not the apostle of Ireland in the sense intended, and he did not drive any snakes out, because there were none to drive.

It has been left to a German to pulverize the whole Patrick story as told hitherto by church historians, and to dovetail the actual facts underlying the story into a consistent structure. I refer to Heinrich Zimmer, professor of Celtic in the University of Berlin, in his article "Keltische Kirche," in the third edition of the Herzog *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche,* edited by Albert Hauck, professor of Church History in Leipzig (Vol. X, 1901, pp. 204-243).[1] It is not surprising that this sweeping change of view has not been cordially received by British scholars, one of whom, Professor J. B. Bury, wrote a *Life of Saint Patrick* (London, 1905) since the appearance of Zimmer's book, and takes note of his positions. Bury still stands for a part of the old tradition; and though I have read his criticisms of Zimmer, I cannot feel that he has shaken the tremendous cumulative force of the German's argument. And I can speak here without prejudice, because the reading of Zimmer has compelled me to abandon my own views.[2] What, then, are Zimmer's reasons for forsaking the view hitherto held of Patrick as the great apostle of Ireland, and how are the facts of which that view is the expression to be interpreted?

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[1] This article has been translated by Miss A. Meyer, "The Celtic Church in Britain and Ireland," London: Nutt, 1902. See notice by Professor Bury in *English Historical Review*, July, 1903, pp. 543–46.

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The first outstanding fact is the immense cleft between Patrick and his first biographers. If Wesley, who died in 1791, should receive no notice in a published biography until about the year 2000, it would be similar to the case of Patrick, of whom the first *Lives* appeared over two hundred years after his death. And yet the tradition makes Patrick as important as Wesley, who had a *Life* published only a year after his death and several within fifty years after. If it should come out that there were no Gospels till 200 or later, what consternation it would cause among biblical scholars! Men of the Kalthoff stripe, who say that there never was such a man as Jesus Christ, would spring up like grasshoppers. The first *Lives* of Patrick are (*a*) the notes made and collected by Tirechan about 670 from the oral and written communications of his teacher, Ultan of Ardbreccan, who died 656; and (*b*) the *Vita Patricii,* by Muirchu Maccumactheni, written at the wish of the bishop Aed of Slebte, who died in 698. These *Lives* are preserved in the Book of Armagh (*Liber Armachanus*), which can be seen in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and were written (copied) between 807 and 846, and both have received large additions since their composition about 690, and their publication in the Book of Armagh about 825. When we remember that Patrick died about 459, the difficulty of believing that the founder of Christianity in Ireland had to wait two hundred years for literary memorials and about four hundred years for published memorials, and then came out full-fledged as a great historical character, and with all kinds of legends and lies (as is acknowledged by those who still hold in the main to the tradition), is insuperable.

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[2] See my chapter on Saint Patrick in the Hurst *History of the Christian Church,* New York, 1897, vol. i, pp. 648–61, founded on Patrick's writings and the best authorities then available.

The difficulty is all the harder when we recall that men of Patrick's alleged greatness, and not even as great, received their literary monuments, like Christ, within the memory of men who knew them. The *Life* of Martin of Tours (d. 400) was written immediately by his pupil. The *Life* of Columba, the founder of Christianity in Scotland (d. 597), was written from the recollections of his friends by Cummene, one of his successors at Iona, within forty years. The *Life* of Columban, another great founder (d. 615), was written by his contemporary Jonas; and that of the apostle of Germany, Boniface (d. 754 or 755), was written by his friend Willibald. Why no monument of the kind to the Irish founder?

Another fact increases the difficulty of swallowing the Patrick tradition. From 459 to 690 the Irish Church was—what? A poor, wretched affair, with no schools and no writers, so that her founder would naturally go without suitable memorials, however much those who entered into his labors might desire to record their loving appreciation? By no means. Through all these years the Irish Church was flourishing in schools and scholars—men like Finnian of Clonard (d. about 550), from whose monastic school scholars came out in as great number—to use the words of Usher—as Greeks of old from the sides of the Horse of Troy; and these scholars were even carrying the light of God through the dark places of the continent. Patrick could have had many biographers in the two hundred years succeeding his death, and it is impossible to conceive of him as not having them if he were the illustrious founder according to tradition.

II

It is well known that in those two hundred years or more there was a live controversy over the mode of reckoning Easter, the Celtic churches holding to one mode, the Roman to another. The latter church was trying to force its reckoning in these far-away churches, but they stood with insular tenacity on their own platform. The tradition brings Patrick from Gaul (Muirchu) or from Italy (Tirechan), and the founder's views, therefore, would have been of immense significance in this controversy, whichever side he was on, and would have been repeatedly referred to. But for one hundred and eighty years there is absolute silence here. Finally, about 633 and 636, there occurs in a letter of Commene to Segone, abbot of Hi (Iona), a reference to a Patrick in order to ascribe to him the introduction of the Dionysian Easter reckoning into Ireland; but only this, and this is the first reference to a Patrick in history. After that, silence reigns again. At the great conference of Whitby in 664, where this question was up, and where historical arguments were chiefly used, the Irish referred their use to Columba, and never mentioned the name of Patrick. This is inexplicable. As the originator of their church, as one who had also dwelt on the continent, his opinion on the Easter question would have been decisive, and would have been appealed to by one of the parties.

The silence of Bede, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Britonum* (731), has been noted before by Patrick scholars. Bury (*English Historical Review,* 1903, pages 543, 544) explains it by saying that Bede had no occasion to mention Patrick. I am not so sure of that. He had occasion to describe at length the Columban Church, which converted a large part of what is now England; and the Columban Church, if tradition is true, sprang directly from Patrick. Writing under the imposing shadow of that founder with the supposed evidences of his church all around him, it is not likely that he would never have been referred to, about as likely as the silence of an historian of American Methodism concerning Wesley. Finnian and Columba come into Bede's pages, and so would Patrick if he had been known as the progenitor of the Irish-Scottish Church. Origins were fascinating to Bede. He even gives the Irish tradition to the origin of the Pictish law of kingly succession through the mother (1. 1). For other traditions Bede had to thank north Ireland—this north Ireland, where (it is said) Patrick had his seat at Armagh, where he died, and whence his tradition took its rise, and yet which apparently knew nothing of the later story by 731.

Speaking of north Ireland, where the tradition makes the chief scene of Patrick's activity, it is curious that the first *Life* was written in south Ireland, instigated by Aed, bishop in the Slethy cloister, County Queens, near Carlow, where they had taken the Roman Easter reckoning about 643, and whence the first account came out concerning Patrick introducing the Dionysian Easter cycle into north Ireland, an account which is of a piece with the whole cloth, as Dionysius lived a century after Patrick.

It should be said also that the writer of the first *Life* complains of the uncertainty of the accounts concerning Patrick (well he might!); and when he comes to actually tell the story of Patrick's work on the island, his narrative is cold and empty as far as fact is concerned, though embellished with some pretty legends. But the story seems molded on Scripture and hagiographical accounts, and lacks the stamp of originality. The *Vita* is an abstract scheme in which the legends are fitted in.

Tirechan does not know anything about Patrick's grave. In a later edition it is said that "Columcille (Columba), the Holy Spirit instigating, showed the tomb of Patrick, and where it is he confirmed—that is, in the saul of Patrick."[3] In 688 Adamnan, the author of the *Life of Columba,* knows nothing of it, though he dedicates a whole book of visions to his hero. But the author of an addition to Muirchu's *Life,* written before 730, buries Patrick in the dune of Lethglaisse. If Patrick had been the apostle of Ireland in the middle of the fifth century, as the seventh-century tradition presupposes, would the memory of his burial place have vanished? In fact, it is a marvelous thing that neither the century of Patrick's own life nor the following century knows anything about that great hero of the faith, and that we have to wait until the closing part of the seventh! Could the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have kept up such a conspiracy of silence concerning Wesley?

III

Another fact which pushes hard against the Patrick legend is the kind of church he founded. It is an episcopal church, it has its see in Armagh, and it is ruled from there by its bishop, as Scotland's Celtic Church is from Iona (Hi, I) by Columba; whereas as a matter of fact the ancient Irish Church, the church of the Irish leaders of the sixth century like Finnian and Columba, was not in organization an episcopal church at all, had no central seat, had no episcopal government, had no bishop except as subsidiary officers used for ordination, but was a monastic church, and was ruled by its abbots or by the head of the clan or tribe who might sometimes be a layman. Nor is there any trace of any preceding organization. And when we remember the vitality of the Irish customs, and how firmly they stuck to the ways of their fathers (as shown, for instance, by Columban of Bobbio and at the Whitby Conference), how many centuries it took for the episcopal government to reorganize the old Church of Ireland, it will be seen how impossible it is to believe in an early transformation of Patrick's episcopal into Columba's monastic church. Nor does the sentence at the close of Muirchu's Life (*dictante Aidu Slebtiensis civitatis episcopo standis*) give support to the theory of other than monastic bishops. There was no city of Slebte in Ireland. The Irish cloisters were colonies of numerous small buildings, and the whole was surrounded by a wall. The word *civitas,* "city," was used in Ireland simply as the name of a monastery. Aed was therefore the cloister bishop of Slethy. "The Irish Church, as it flourished in the sixth century," says Zimmer, and he italicizes the words, "is itself a loud protest against the legend which came out in the seventh century concerning the introduction of Christianity into Ireland."

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[3] Saul, sabhall, barn, because Dichu, the chieftain, gave Patrick his barn or a building shaped like it, as a church. The name of the place itself became Sabhall, gradually changed to Saul.

The Patrick legend presupposes a heathen Ireland before 432, when the great apostle began his labors. But this fundamental supposition is false. First, there was constant communication between southeast Ireland and southwest Britain, more even than between the coast of Ireland and the interior. The distance was not great (one can see across), and the languages were related. This intercourse is shown distinctly in the *Lives* of the saints of the sixth century. Even in the third and fourth centuries there were settlements of the Irish in the Bay of Severn. Second, there was a well-organized church in Britain in the fourth century. With these facts in mind, is it thinkable that Ireland remained heathen till 432?

Indeed, we have literary evidence of the Christianization of Ireland, or of large parts of it, by other men. The Irish Acta Sanctorum represent older and independent contemporaries of Patrick as apostles to the heathen, especially in the three southeast coast principalities, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow, and the two principalities lying behind, Tipperary and Kilkenny—exactly in those parts where communication with southwest Britain would naturally spread Christianity. Local witnesses of the cult of these men are adduced. Now, when the Patrick legend came out, its makers did not try to do away with the numerous contradictions in the *Lives* of the saints to this legend, but sought simply to unite the actual local traditions with the new view.

Reference has already been made to the fact that the first *Lives* of Patrick represent him as laboring in north Ireland. Muirchu Maccumactheni's "Vita" makes Patrick land quickly at Wicklow, which he leaves immediately for the north, and remains without ever setting foot in south Ireland. The notes of Tirechan are to the same effect, much about the north, but only one sentence that he ever came to Munster. Muirchu himself was a south Irishman and really knew more about Patrick's work in his own country than anywhere else. But was there not a "method in this madness"? The first mention of a Patrick was in connection with the efforts of south Ireland to win over the contrary-minded north Ireland to close in with the Roman Church, at least with regard to the Easter celebration. And it would appear that the first *Lives* were a peace offering to the north in the shape of idealized history: a great missionary who came from the continent, with the applause and glory of bishops from the far south, perhaps even from Rome, who therefore represented ecumenical Christendom, and who as the heroic and miracle-working apostle of the north recommended by his life and example the Catholic reckoning of Easter and a more conciliatory attitude toward Rome, an attitude that had already been partially assumed by south Ireland, and which they thus commended to the north. But the *Lives* were too wise to say anything about the activities of Patrick in south Ireland, nor was it necessary.

IV

The high honor of Pelagius in early Ireland and his wide vogue is another fact which is inconsistent with the supposition of the Patrick legend that in 431 or 432 Ireland was a heathen land. The ancient Irish canons cite Pelagius just as they cite Jerome or Augustine. In the New Testament in the Book of Armagh we read: "Here begins the prologue of Pelagius to all the epistles." In an old Irish manuscript of Paul's epistles preserved in the library of the University of Würzburg there is found an interlinear commentary in Irish and Latin, whose chief source is the unmutilated Pauline commentary by Pelagius.[4] In this manuscript Pelagius is cited by name in more than nine hundred pages. So also Sedulius Scottus, another well-known Irishman, active in Lüttich, Cologne, and Metz 848-858, who compiled a "Collectaneum in Epistolas Pauli," builds largely on Pelagius, and on his unmutilated commentary. From the seventh to the ninth centuries Ireland possessed and highly valued the great Pauline commentary of Pelagius. This does not mean that the Irish Church indorsed his views as to depravity and original sin, any more than the reverers of Wesley indorse his views on the immortality of the brute creation; but it does mean that from an early time Pelagius was highly honored as a church doctor in Ireland, where his books were a common manual long after his condemnation in Italy and Africa. In fact, according to Jerome (Migne, 24. 682), Pelagius was himself an Irishman.[5] (It must be remembered that until the tenth century or after the word Scotus or Scottus referred to Ireland.) If Pelagius came out of a cloister in southeast Ireland, we have another reason for his honor there. And it throws no little light on the culture of the British and Irish monasteries that Pelagius at the Synod of Jerusalem in 415 could defend himself in Greek, while his opponent, Orosius, needed an interpreter. From these same Irish cloisters four hundred years later there went out another man of equal renown, John Scotus Erigena, whose fate on the continent was similar to that of Pelagius.

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[4] There is a mutilated commentary of Pelagius in Jerome's *Works*, Migne, 30. 644ff.

The vogue of Pelagius in Ireland is inconsistent with the Patrick legend. For look: Pelagianism was killed in Italy in 418. In 429 Germanus of Auxerre (with whom Patrick himself had to do), sent by Pope Celestine, killed it in south Britain. But the tradition says that Patrick came from France or Italy, 432, after Pelagianism had been cast out, and founded a church in a heathen country, a church in which everything connected with Pelagius would have been suspect from the first. Whereas for four hundred years Pelagius was one of the foremost teachers of the Irish Church, on a level with Augustine and Jerome. How could this be except Patrick, the pupil of Germanus, was himself a Pelagian? But if south Ireland was already Christian 400-425, we can easily see how the writings of Pelagius, who we know was greatly honored in south Britain in those years, could have been so widely read and revered in Ireland.[6]

Professor Zimmer then adduces philological facts which show that the old ecclesiastical terms in Irish were translated or adopted not immediately from the Latin, but from the Latin *through the old British tongue.* If the legend is correct that Christianity was introduced into Ireland by Patrick, who came from the south (even though he was born in Britain), and by Roman and Frankish helpers, even these transliterations would have been directly from the Latin. But if Ireland was converted by British missionaries speaking Irish, these linguistic peculiarities are exactly as we should expect.

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[5] The Irish origin of Pelagius is acknowledged by von Schubert, in his edition of Möller *Kirchengeschichte*, Tübingen and Leipzig, 1902, p. 629, by Krüger in his and Preuschen's *Kirchengeschichte: Das Altertum*, 2 Aufl., 1923, p. 230; whereas Loofs still sticks to the tradition that he was from Britain (Herzog, *Realencyklopädie*, 3 Aufl., vol. 15, 1904, pp. 749–50), as does also Kurtz-Bonwetsch in 14th Auflage of the *Kirchengeschichte*, 1906.

[6] Since writing his article in the Herzog-Hauck (1901), Zimmer has gone into the relation of Pelagius to Ireland with great thoroughness, especially in the minute study of his unmutilated commentary, in his learned book, "*Pelagius in Irland: Texte und untersuchungen zur Patristischen Literatur.*" Berlin, 1901. See especially pages 18-25.

V

Finally, the writings of Patrick himself are inconsistent with the tradition. These writings (the *Confession* and the epistle to the British monk Coroticus) are genuine. For it is unthinkable that any one who was familiar with the Patrick of the legend should ever have forged these writings. Nor is there any ground in fact or language to throw them out. But they are inconsistent with the Patrick of the historians. Even Schöll saw this as far back as 1851, when he said in his able Latin treatise: "If in truth Patrick, altogether unlearned and most rustic, wrote the *Confession,* he was not at all the one whom posterity has been extolling with the highest praises."[7] The *Confession* is the work of a man who looks back upon a long life (it is written near the end of his life), who complains bitterly of ingratitude, vindicates himself against reproofs of presumption in taking up a calling for which he was not competent, and who threatens to turn his back upon Ireland because he sees there the special work of his life shattered. Though he calls himself "constituted a bishop for Ireland," he says he is "contemned by some" and that he is "contemptible among many." Nor does he say that he has consecrated a single bishop, nor established a church organization in

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[7] De Ecclesiasticae Britonum Scotorumque Historiae Fontibus, Berlin, 1851, p. 71.

Ireland. The actual Patrick of the fifth century, therefore, cannot be the Patrick of the *Lives* of the seventh.

What, then, did the real Patrick do (for there was a Patrick), according to the only genuine records of his life? Sprung from a clerical family (for ministers had wives then) in Britain, he grew up into an easy-going Christianity till he was sixteen. He was then captured by plundering Irishmen and carried over into their island into slavery, where he tended swine and sheep for six years. He escapes to his home a sadder and more pious man. He sees visions calling him to go over and convert the Irish. Though poorly equipped intellectually, he went; and among the tribes still heathen he had great success, so that he baptized "many thousand men" (*Confession,* § 22), which is simply a general statement for a large number.[8] Though scorned and laughed at on account of his ignorance, he yet was able by his consecration, zeal, practical wisdom, and knowledge of the Scriptures (compare some of the early Methodist preachers, who, like Patrick, received little scholastic training) to do great work. Even then Ireland is far from being converted, for after his life work is over he is in dread of their onsets: "But I, poor and miserable, even if I wished for riches, yet have them not. I daily expect either murder, or to be circumvented, or to be reduced to slavery, or mishap of some kind" (*Confession,* § 23). Many others opposed his mission on account of his ignorance (§ 20), which ignorance is sufficiently witnessed by the broken Latin of his Confession and the simplicity of its contents.

Is this like the founder of the most learned Church in the West, this pious but ignorant brother who counts nineteen to the dozen, and like some preachers helps himself to a biblical quotation when he cannot express his thought—this Church in which from the fifth to the ninth century learning flourished as nowhere else in the West? Nor was this culture subsequently brought in. The Irish Church of the sixth century was the unfolding of that of the fifth, and fruits like that of Finnian of Clonard, Columba of Hi, Comgell of Bangor, Columban of Bobbio, Adamnan, Dicuil, Sedulius, and finally Scotus Erigena, did not grow upon the tree planted by Patrick.

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[8] We must not be deceived by Patrick's numbers, who on such matters had the naïve attitude of the biblical writers (cf. Matt. 3. 5). He says that the raiders who carried him off took with him into captivity "so many thousand men" (*Confession,* § I), whereas we know such pirates would think a few hundreds or rather even scores vast booty.

VI

What, now, is the truth in the Patrick story? We have an indisputable contemporary writer of a mission to Ireland, namely, the chronicle of Prosper Tiro. Under the date of 431 he says, "Palladius, ordained by Pope Celestine, is sent first bishop to the Irish believing in Christ." Here the Irish are already Christian, as Christian as Gaul was at the time of Gregory of Tours. When we remember that the ancient Celtic Church already had missionary monastic bishops, we see that what Prosper means is that Palladius was the first regularly or canonically ordained bishop who came from the continental Catholic Church. Nor was it customary to ordain bishops for countries where there were no Christians (compare the case of Augustine of Canterbury). Now we have the solution: *Palladius and Patrick are one and the same person.* For: (1) Palladius went to Ireland 431, and tradition makes Patrick go in 432. With the opportunities of travel then, this double journey is hardly probable. Nor in the later note of Prosper in 437 is there any knowledge of the failure of Palladius' mission stated in the later legend. (2) Palladius was "ordained a bishop for the Irish believing in Christ," and Patrick was "constituted a bishop for Ireland." (3) It was at the instigation of Palladius the deacon that Germanus of Auxerre was sent in 429 to Britain to win the people back to the "Catholic" faith from Pelagianism. This influence attributed to a deacon would hardly have been possible if Palladius were not a Briton, and had association with Germanus on his way to Rome. Now, Patrick says that he was a Briton and had been in Gaul, while the *Vita* says he had been with Germanus, and Tirechan that he had spent seven years on land and water in Gaul and Italy. (4) If Palladius was then a Briton, it is likely that his native name meant "warlike" or "relating to war." Now, the first *Lives* give Patrick's real name as Sucat, or Sochet, or (the later Hymn of Fiacc) Succat. In old British the word means "brave in war"—"Palladius" is a Roman translation of the British name "Succat," as even O'Brien acknowledges.[9] While in Latin surroundings, Succat let himself be called Palladius; but when he took up his work on the "barbaric island," he reverted to his old name; and therefore the name "Palladius" remained unknown to the Irish writers on Patrick. By and by, when Prosper's notice came to their knowledge, they assumed two different persons.

All very well, you say, but where do we get the name "Patrick"? The pious Patrick had a worldly pride in his origin, for which, I suppose, he is not to be blamed. "I am noble according to the flesh," he writes to Coroticus, "for I was born of a father who was a decurion, but I sold my nobility for the benefit of others, nor am I ashamed nor penitent." He refers to the same thing in his *Confession*—"that I might give up my nobility for the good of others." In Rome at that time the title "Patricius" was granted as a personal high distinction. Inasmuch as Sucat (Palladius) carried over these Roman relations to the small British country town of Bannaventa, where his father was both deacon and senator or burgomaster, he held himself entitled to claim the title of Patricius, and stepped out in Ireland as Sucat Patricius, in his own writings simply at Patricius. Finally, when this later name was transformed into Irish, according to the laws governing such transliterations already mentioned, it would appear as Cathrige or similar forms, the very name by which Patrick was called in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries.

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[9] "Irish Ecclesiastical Record," 1887, pp. 723ff.

VII

Such are the arguments of Zimmer against the Patrick of history as read hitherto, and I cannot but feel that they are sufficient, so amply sufficient that I have abandoned the old view and now teach my classes according to the above tenor. How, then, does early Irish Church history appear in this light? Here is Zimmer's sketch: Christianity came into Ireland in the fourth century from Britain, where a well-organized church existed, as a natural consequence of the close communication between the two lands. The conversion of Ireland was a result of the first mighty wave of monasticism which from about 350 poured over Gaul, Britain, and finally Ireland. Two things show this: (1) the honor which Martin of Tours enjoyed in Ireland, so much so that in the ninth century it was considered fortunate to bring the new apostle Patrick into association with him—in fact, to make him his nephew; (2) the organization of the Irish Church in independence of the British from which it sprang. How far north and west Ireland was Christianized in 432 we cannot tell—probably partially. Now Sucat (Patrick) comes in. Born near Daventry (many scholars say Dumbarton), he was carried captive to Ireland, where he fed swine for six years in County Antrim (402-408), where his afflictions led him to Christ. He heard in dreams voices telling him to run. He did so, came to the coast, was taken in by heathen sailors, who led him around for sixty days, when he again ran away and reached his home, 408-409. In a dream he heard a voice as in Acts 16. 8-10, in another Christ appeared to him, in a third the Holy Spirit, so that he believed himself called as bishop to Ireland. Great obstacles were in his way. His parents were against it, and his neighbors thought him too rude and ignorant. But he succeeded in becoming a deacon. Then he tried to get in foreign lands what he could not get at home. If we may believe Ultan's notes as reported in Tirechan, he spent seven years wandering through Gaul and Italy, staying for a while with Germanus at Auxerre and then in Rome, 429. In the meantime he had Romanized his barbarian name of Sucat to Palladius. He was constantly speaking of his mission and trying to get ordained for it. As Britain was far off and but loosely connected with the empire, he obtained more influence than he would otherwise on account of his lack of education. He also probably used for all it was worth the high position of his father. On his impulse Germanus is sent to southwest Britain to fight Pelagianism, 429. In 431 he obtains his longed-for ordination as Bishop of Ireland, helped partly by the thought that he might be of use in counteracting any traces of Pelagianism in southeast Ireland. In 432 he came to Ireland, took again his old name among his kindred Celts, adding to it, to emphasize the position of his family, the title "Patricius." But of the details of his work in Ireland we know nothing, he tells us nothing, and what is told two hundred years after is worthless. After twenty years' work, he died a bitterly disappointed man, March 17, 459, if we may believe the annals and the Luxuil calendar (that is, as to the date). He was seventy-three. He had no influence on the Irish Church, was forgotten outside of the place of his own activity (southeast Ireland), where later in the seventh century, from material left by him and left concerning him, he was made an apostle to heathen Ireland by men who wanted to glorify Ireland with a great founder, as the Saxons had such a founder in Augustine of Canterbury, and the Picts of North Britain in Columba of Iona.

NOTE.—*Bury on Patrick.* Professor Bury in his *Life of Saint Patrick*, London, 1905, makes some striking acknowledgments. "When I came to study Patrick," he says (Preface, p. v), "I found it impossible to gain any clear conception of the man and his work. The subject was wrapt in obscurity, and the obscurity was encircled by an atmosphere of controversy and conjecture." Even Todd's great work (*Saint Patrick*, Dublin, 1864), "preeminent for learning and critical acumen, left me doubtful about every fact connected with Patrick's life" (p. vi). Bury agrees that Patrick was not the apostle of Ireland in the sense usually understood, inasmuch as Christianity was established there before, and Patrick converted only a part of the island. He also goes as far as to say that even "if it were demonstrated that Patrick and Palladius were one and the same person, this would be quite compatible with the view of Patrick adopted in the foregoing pages as with the view of Zimmer" (p. 385). Still Bury cannot hold the main thesis of Zimmer, for the following reasons (pp. 390ff): (1) The *Lives* were based on older written material. But how much older? Why not published earlier? (2) It is inconceivable that all the traditions which Tierechan collected both from written and oral sources concerning Patrick's work in Connaught should have been invented, 625-660, where Patrick's name was never known. But the legends could have been invented in southeast where Patrick's name was known. (3) The Patrick legends are of a kind which come out or grow up soon after the death of the hero. But it is difficult to assign rules which govern the growth of legends, nor do legends grow up soon after death of the hero. (4) If Patrick spent his life in Leinster, then why did no churches there claim him? Because of his enemies (see his *Confession*), and the small results of his work. (5) If in the seventh century it was remembered that Patrick and Palladius were the same person, why were they differentiated into two, when it was more to the interest of Rome to glorify an apostle sent by Celestine? If it was not remembered, then the passage which Zimmer quotes for the identification (*Lib. Arm.*, 332) can be eliminated from the discussion as resting on conjecture. But one account does connect Patrick with Italy, and a passage may bear testimony to a fact, even if the full fact has been forgotten. I might add that the two traditions about Patrick's death, that of Tirechan (the truer one) that he died 461, aged seventy-two, and that of Muirchu that he died 493, aged one hundred and twenty, show how uncertain and shadowy was the knowledge of Patrick when the first *Lives* came out. It will be seen from the above article that Zimmer's conclusion rests on a series of indisputable facts whose cumulative force, in my judgment, is irresistible, and which is not broken by Bury's objections. The latter acknowledges, however, that his own view of Patrick's life written independently, can be harmonized with Zimmer. That is, as to the real Patrick he reaches practically the same results as this article, though from another direction.

CHAPTER X

DID THE CHURCH PERSECUTE GALILEO?

In the beginning of the seventeenth century it was not settled even among scientific men whether the earth was a stationary body at the center of the universe, around which the sun and the rest of the heavenly bodies went, or whether the earth and other bodies went around the sun. In the previous century, namely, in 1530, Copernicus had completed his celebrated work, *De Revolutionibus,* not printed till the year of his death, 1543, in which he founded modern astronomy. He taught that the earth and universe are spherical, that the motions of the heavenly bodies are circular and uniform, that the earth moves around the sun, and that the earth is not the center of the universe, but the earth and planets, the order of which Copernicus established, revolve around the sun. It will be seen from this that the learned German canon of Frauenburg really laid the foundations of modern astronomy, which, however, required much improvement by Kepler, who was born twenty-eight years after Copernicus died, by Galileo, and especially by Sir Isaac Newton, "who finally marked out the form of modern theoretical astronomy." It is singular that while some Catholic theologians received Copernicus' views with favor, Luther denounced him as a fool who wrote in defiance of Scripture, and Melanchthon urged the suppression of such mischievous doctrines by the secular power. This favorable view of the Catholics, however, may be due in part to a preface written for the work by Andreas Osiander without the author's knowledge, in which Copernicus' view is treated as an hypothesis and uncertain and improbable. As it was supposed that this preface was written by Copernicus himself, the idea was spread abroad that he put out his theory only hypothetically. Draper says that the Inquisition condemned Copernicus' book as heretical, denouncing it as "that false Pythagorean doctrine utterly contrary to Holy Scripture."[1] But Father Ronayne says that many churchmen received Copernicus' theory with applause, and that the "church had no fear of it and put no obstacles to its propagation."[2]

At any rate, when the seventeenth century opened and long after, the Copernican astronomy was a burning question. It was by no means understood that his system was rejected by the church. Churchmen were on both sides. Galileo now came on the scene, one of the fathers of experimental science. He was born in Pisa, February 18, 1564, being a contemporary of Kepler. He studied medicine and the prevailing Aristotelian philosophy, though his scientific spirit soon brought him out of sympathy with the latter. He entered the University of Pisa in 1581. He noticed that the oscillations of a lamp in the cathedral, whatever the range of the oscillations, were all accomplished in the same time. He tested this, and then comparing the beat of his own pulse with the action of the pendulum, he concluded that by this equality of oscillation the pendulum might be made an agent in the exact measurement of time, a discovery which he utilized later in the construction of an astronomical clock. He now began the study of mathematics. He soon invented the hydrostatic balance, and wrote a treatise on the specific gravity of solid bodies. All this made him professor of mathematics at the University of Pisa. He brought out the theory, then novel, that all falling bodies, great and small, descend with equal velocity, and proved it by experiments from the top of the leaning tower of Pisa. This provoked the Aristotelians, "whose bitterness was exacerbated by the cutting sarcasms of the successful demonstrator." He resigned his chair in 1591, and went to Florence. In 1592 he was nominated to the chair of mathematics at the University of Padua, where his lectures attracted crowds of pupils from all parts of Europe. Here he taught for eighteen years, 1592-1610. It is said of him that he was the first to adapt the Italian idiom to philosophical instruction. He invented a thermometer, a compass or sector, and a refracting telescope. With this telescope he soon greatly enlarged his knowledge of the heavens, so that he became all the more convinced of the correctness of the Copernican heliocentric theory. He also concluded that the moon, instead of being a self-luminous and perfectly smooth sphere, owed her illumination to reflection, and that she had an unequal surface diversified by valleys and mountains. The Milky Way, he said, was a track of countless separate stars. On the night of January 7, 1610, he discovered the four satellites of Jupiter, and six nights later he came to the conclusion that they were satellites proper and not fixed stars. He called them the medicean stars, from the Medici family, who were his protectors. He also noticed movable spots on the disc of the sun, from which he inferred the sun rotated. In this year 1610 he was recalled to Florence by the grand duke of Tuscany, who made him his philosopher and mathematician, with a good salary, but with no duties save to prosecute his scientific studies. He soon discovered the triple form of Saturn and the phases of Venus and of Mars.

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[1] *History of the Conflict between Scripture and Religion*, New York, 1874, p. 168.

[2] *Religion and Science: their Union Historically Considered*, New York, 1879, p. 204. The truth is that Copernicus died too soon to suffer for his views, and the preface staved off formal condemnation, which came, however, in 1616.

It is now that Galileo enters the arena of church history. He was so sure of his views that he spoke of the opponents of the Copernican system with arrogance and sarcasm, and thus aroused their ire. Besides he had proved his points so well that the Ptolemaists felt that their position was endangered, and thus they the more readily appealed to ecclesiastical authority to put down what they could not answer.

The Bible was necessarily appealed to, and Galileo had to meet its apparent contradiction to his theories. For instance, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still. But I do not find that Galileo said anything about the Bible that should have brought him before church courts. Galileo was a good Roman Catholic Christian. He insists that the Bible is the word of God as the world is the work of God. It is not its province to teach geography, astronomy, etc., which are to be learned from an examination of God's world. As the Roman theologian and church historian Baronius said, "The Bible was given to teach us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go." There are hundreds of passages in the Bible, even those treating of God himself, said Galileo, which, literally taken, would be blasphemous. There is nothing, therefore, to cause anxiety if when the Bible speaks of the sun and earth it uses popular language. We must remember these reasonable principles of interpretation adopted by Galileo, if we would do justice to the proceedings against him. Galileo was no heretic. He was simply a scientific investigator.

The old inquisitional court had been reorganized by Sixtus V (the Pope of the Spanish Armada) in 1586 in the same form that it has to-day. Its official title was the Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition, or also the Congregation of the Holy Office. It consisted of twelve cardinals, of whom the Pope was president. Its conclusions generally began with "The most holy has ordained, decreed, commanded." A number of theologians and canonists were assigned as consulting members. A Dominican monk regularly acted as reporter. Outside of Rome, local inquisition courts could be instituted anywhere when needed, preferably composed of Dominican priests and bishops as presumably learned and zealous, though any others could act when necessary.

There was another Roman court called the Holy Congregation of the Index whose duty it was to read new books, and if it thought best prohibit their possession and reading.

Galileo was before the Court of the Inquisition in 1615-16 and in 1632-33. First, then, the trial of 1615-16.

The roar of the coming storm was a sermon preached in Florence by the Dominican friar Caccini. He said that all mathematicians were of the devil, and that they ought to be expelled from Christian states. He took for his text the words of the angels to the disciples after the ascension, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Did not this text forbid all astronomical study? Caccini soon appeared in Rome as a denunciator of Galileo.

The next year, February 5, 1615, another Dominican, Gorini of Florence, sent a denunciation of Galileo to one of the cardinals. He said that he was fulfilling a duty incumbent on all Christians, and especially on Dominicans, who were the special dogs of the Inquisition, as he proved by their name, *Domenicani Domini canes*. But Gorini went further: he sent to the cardinals a book by one of the Galileists, which said that the earth rotated, and the sky was stationary. Such a view contradicted Holy Scripture, contradicted also the Holy Fathers, and especially Thomas Aquinas, and besides went against the Aristotelian philosophy on which scholastic theology was in a sense founded. The document or book thus inclosed by Gorini to the inquisitors was a copy of a letter of Galileo defending his views and asserting their harmony with Scripture. It was addressed to the professor of mathematics at Pisa, the Benedictine Castelli. But Galileo sent another copy of the letter to Monsignor Pini in Rome, requesting him to show it to Father Griemberger and to Cardinal Bellarmine. A theologian examined the letter but found nothing seriously out of the way in it, and the Inquisition did not proceed further.

Caccini's denunciations were also examined, but the Inquisition did not think it best to proceed on them. Soon after they did the same thing under another impulse.

On February 19, 1616, the theologians of the Inquisition sat in judgment on two theses presented to them by an enemy of Galileo. The first thesis was: the sun is the center of the world, and stationary. The second: the earth is not the center of the world, and not stationary; it daily rotates around itself. In four days they published this decision as their unanimous judgment: "Both these theses are foolish and philosophically false. The first is also formally heretical, in that it contradicts the words of Holy Scripture and the interpretations given them by the Holy Fathers. The second was less erroneous theologically." Poor Cardinals! They were caught in the meshes of one of the first principles of Catholicism, namely, that Holy Scripture must be interpreted by the unanimous consent of the Fathers. And did not all the Fathers so understand the Bible? Of course. But now there is not a Catholic boy or girl of fifteen in any parochial school in the world who does not believe that the two sentences solemnly condemned by the cardinals of 1616 are true. Where, then, are the interpretations of the Holy Fathers? The Roman Catholic Church has a way of ignoring such interpretations when inconvenient to her, and holding to such as she likes. Anyhow, the decision of the Holy Congregation of February 23, 1616, condemned in effect Galileo, but it condemned God also and the simplest laws of his universe.

Two days after (February 25, 1616) at a meeting of the

Inquisition presided over by the Pope it was determined to send for Galileo, warn him to renounce the Copernican theory, forbid him to teach, defend, or discuss it, and, if he refused, to imprison him. He was not imprisoned, and, therefore, he must have made the promise. One document of that time says that Bellarmine reported to a session of the Inquisition that Galileo had been admonished to give up his opinion and had acquiesced. Another says that he had the sentence of the court communicated to him, but it does not say whether he acquiesced or not. The protocol of February 26, 1616, says distinctly that the adverse sentence of the court was conveyed to Galileo by Bellarmine in the presence of a notary, witness, etc., and that Galileo promised obedience, that is, that he would not teach either orally or in writing these astronomical views. Galileo had been in Rome for a few months, going on his own motion. He was not himself present before the court. He returned to Florence at the end of May, 1616.

On the third of March, 1616, the Congregation of the Index put forth a decree condemning the notion of the "motion of the earth and immovability of the sun as false and thoroughly opposed to Holy Scripture," and announcing that the works of Copernicus must not be circulated until the necessary changes are made in them. All other books treating of the same subject in the same way were also to be prohibited. These and all the other decrees were approved by the Pope in order to be valid, though not necessarily signed by him.

Individual Protestant theologians of the Reformation times or later held to the Ptolemaic astronomy, but they never met in solemn conclave and discussed the Copernican astronomy, and formally condemned it as false and heretical, and then forbade under pain of imprisonment anyone to teach it. That was left for the Holy Congregations of the Inquisition and of the Index, presided over and confirmed by the Pope, who in his doctrinal deliverances is supposed to be guided by the Holy Spirit. History shows that few professed Christian teachers have been less guided by the Holy Spirit than the Pope. Anyhow, the earth still revolved on its axis once a day and around the sun once a year, and the sun was still the center of the planetary system, after the famous decrees of 1616 as before. So I think to-day that the church better not condemn Christian scholars till the evidence is all in. Did Moses write the Pentateuch? Were the so-called Mosaic codes the deposits of later times in part or in whole? Did Daniel write Daniel? Did Peter write a Second Peter? Let not the modern cardinals become confused and frightened before new problems and new knowledge, and prematurely decide and excommunicate. Their decision will not change the facts. Everything will be as before. But if some new theological Galileo should say, "Christ is not divine, he paid no atonement for sin, because there is no sin of fatal consequence"; if in essential matters of the Christian religion as a religion, he should deny, as did the Gnostics of old, then you should refute the offender, and if he persist in his denials, then you should cast him out and save Christianity from disintegration and ultimate extinction.

Well, the years passed. Of course Galileo did not change his belief. He came to think apparently that the decision of the papal congregation would not be revived. By and by he grew more confident. He forgot his pledge, or thought in new times it was no longer binding. The liberal Cardinal Barberini became Pope as Urban VIII in 1623. Galileo began to broach his views once more.

Finally the scientist took courage to write a book which did not formally violate his word that he would never defend his astronomical views, but which violated it in a real sense. He wrote a *Dialogue* in which one speaker defends the Ptolemaic, another the Copernican, scheme of the universe, while a third weighs the arguments on both sides so as to leave the question undecided. It is evident that Galileo must have written under great restraint, for he had outgrown the Ptolemaic theory. And the arguments did lean most heavily on the Copernican side. In 1630 he took the manuscript to Rome, submitted it to the papal censor Riccardi, and received permission to have it printed. It was published in Florence in 1632 with the imprimatur of authorities in both Rome and Florence.

This *Dialogue* of 1632 brought about the second trial of Galileo. When he laid the manuscript before the censor Riccardi in Rome, the latter found that the Copernican theory was put forth more than hypothetically. He therefore commissioned Visconti, Professor of Mathematics, to revise the work and "reduce the theory to a hypothesis," as had been done in the preface to Copernicus' book. Further, he said that an introduction and peroration in the same sense should be added to the work. Galileo assented, and Riccardi gave permission that the book thus corrected should be printed in Rome and the proof-sheets submitted to him. But Galileo wanted the printing done in Florence, and Riccardi gave his permission, providing the Inquisition in Florence would see that the conditions he had exacted were carried out. The Pope also desired certain things said which would leave still more in doubt the truthfulness of the Copernican theory. It would appear that while some of the humiliating conditions exacted of Galileo in regard to the publication of his book were observed, others were not; for when in January, 1632, the book was published in Florence, with the permission of Riccardi and of the Florence Inquisition on the back of the title page, Riccardi had all the copies of the book sent to Rome, detained in the custom house, and confiscated. The publisher in Florence was prohibited from selling any more copies, and commanded to send all that he had on hand to Rome. The Romans said that the preface was printed in different type from the rest of the book, while the antidote which the Pope wanted inserted to counteract the Copernicanism of the book was put into the mouth of Simplicius, a simpleton who defended the Ptolemaic astronomy with poor arguments, and that the Copernican theory was not put out as a hypothesis. It is also said that the Pope had an idea—probably suggested by the enemies of Galileo—that he (the Pope) was meant by Simplicius, as some of the arguments he had used in conversation with Galileo were put into the mouth of this imaginary interlocutor. There was no truth in this last suggestion, as Galileo must necessarily use the current arguments, those, namely, which the Pope or any other defender of the Ptolemaic would necessarily make.

Blood was in the eye of the Pope and his Inquisition. The age of the noble victim—he was now seventy—and his illustrious services to science, and the fact that he was a devout Catholic, his only heresy being that he believed that the earth revolved around the sun and not vice versa—all this could not save Galileo. He was summoned to appear in Rome in October, 1632, to be examined by the Holy Office in that city. Galileo promised to obey. But on the thirteenth of October he wrote a long letter to Cardinal Barberini, the Pope's nephew, pleading his advanced age and his infirm health, and asking that he might be examined by the church officers in Florence, and not thus be compelled to take the journey. This was not granted, but the inquisitor in Florence granted him a month's respite.

On November 25 (1632), at a sitting of the Inquisition in Rome a letter from Florence was read praying that Galileo might be heard in Florence. The reply was that he must come to Rome. Then Florence wrote that Galileo was bedfast, and testimony was sent from three doctors that the invalid could not travel without danger to life. The Holy Office wrote back as follows: "His Holiness and the Holy Congregation could not and ought not to tolerate such excuses, and if Galileo were incapable of traveling without danger to life, a commissary and doctors should be sent over; if in their view Galileo could travel, the Inquisitor must despatch him at once; or if he really were too ill, he should as soon as possible after recovery be sent, as prisoner and chained, to Rome, the physicians and commissary being sent at Galileo's own cost, because he had not immediately obeyed." Such were the tender mercies of Rome to her most illustrious son. Galileo declared his willingness, as before, as soon as he got better.

On the 20th of January, 1633, borne on a litter, the great scientist proceeds to Rome. When he arrived on the confines of the States of the Church, the latter kept him there on a seventy-days' quarantine. He reached Rome February 13, 1633, and was entertained for the time at the house of the Florentine ambassador.

Now that they had him in Rome, there was exasperating coolness in the delay in proceeding with the case. It was not till the twelfth of April that he had his first examination. This was by the Commissary General before the official prosecutor of the Inquisition. In this Galileo admitted that in 1616 Bellarmine had told him the Copernican teaching was not tenable. When the protocol of February 26, 1616, was read to him in which he was prohibited from defending or teaching in any way the doctrine in question, Galileo said he could not remember that the words "in any way" were used. He had kept to the written testimony of March 26, 1616, that the views were not to be defended. He did not think he violated this in his *Dialogue*, as he had there defended the other view.

It must be said that in this Galileo did not act with entire ingenuousness. He had really defended the Copernican views in his *Dialogue,* as the committee who examined the book showed by ample and honest quotations. One of the fairest and best of the Galileo experts, Karl von Gebler, has proved that there are grave reasons for believing that the protocol of February 26, 1616, in which Galileo promised not to discuss or teach "in any way" the condemned views was falsified.[3] Space will not allow quoting his arguments, but I have been much impressed by them. Anyhow, the admonition of February 25, and the official papers of March, 1616, which bound Galileo, while explicit as to not holding or teaching the views, did not have "in any way." It was mainly the document of February 26, 1616, by which they "had" Galileo in the trial of 1633, and we cannot believe that the judges then knew it as supposititious. If they did, their use of it was dastardly to a horrible degree.

In the meantime the Commissary General of the Inquisition labored with Galileo, convinced him that he really had defended the views, and got him to promise that he would confess, retract, and beg for mercy.

The next examination took place April 30, 1633. Here he made the following statement: He had been reading over his *Dialogue,* and was obliged to admit that in several places the language used might convey the impression that he really held to the Copernican theory. But this was not his purpose; and if he had used these expressions, he had done so through ignorance, carelessness, and vanity; he had fallen into the snare to which all must feel themselves liable of wishing to display their ingenuity by bringing forward plausible grounds for false positions. He was ready to write a continuation of the *Dialogue* in which the fallacy of the Copernican theory would be pointed out. Galileo was now dismissed to the ambassador's house.

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[3] *Galileo and the Roman Curia,* translated, London, 1879, pp. 89-90.

On May 10 he was again called before the commissioners. Here he presented a defense, which he had been asked to prepare. He said again he did not remember that he had been prohibited from defending *in any way* the Copernican views. He had proved his good intention by submitting his *Dialogue* to the Chief Inquisitor, and if he had offended against the prohibition of the Congregation of the Index, he had done so not willfully, but through vanity, and he was ready to atone for his errors. He finally pointed out the pitiable bodily condition into which continued anxiety for ten months, and the inconveniences of a long and arduous journey in the worst season of the year, had thrown a septuagenarian. Though all these horrors might not be sufficient punishment for his errors, still let a failing old man be mercifully dealt with.

This did not satisfy the Holy Office. They wanted a formal recantation of the awful heresy of saying that the earth went round the sun. On the 16th of June they came together again, the Pope in the chair. They came to this conclusion: Galileo must be examined relative to intention (a technical word meaning "his real mind," "his actual views"), and since he was justly suspected of holding the views, he must be examined under threat of torture, and he must in the presence of the Holy Congregation of the Inquisition solemnly recant and purge himself from heresy. After that he was not to be free, but kept a prisoner by the Congregation; nor was he ever in the future to treat the question of the earth's motion or the sun's relative standing still on pain of being dealt with as a relapsed heretic (that is, burned to death); and, finally, the *Dialogue* must be prohibited.

On the 21st of June he was examined as to his "intention," that is, whether he really held the heretical views as to the earth's motion put forth in the *Dialogue*. In this examination Galileo continued to affirm to the end that he did not hold the Copernican views after Bellarmine had conveyed to him in 1616 the decision of the church that they must not be maintained. He was then threatened with torture if he did not speak the truth, as his book showed that he was justly suspected of holding the views. He replied that he did not hold the views and had not since 1616, and they could deal with him as they wished. In the reports of the verdict published the next day occur two sentences which have given rise to an excited debate whether Galileo was really tortured to induce him to confess that he intended to teach the views in the *Dialogue*. The two sentences are: "As it appears to us that thou hast not spoken the whole truth relatively to thine intentions, we have considered it necessary to subject thee to a rigorous examination" (*rigoroso esame*). The other sentence declares he has "come under grave suspicion of heresy before this Holy Office."

In the Inquisition in Italy there were different stages of torture, as we learn from the *Sacro Arsenale* of the inquisitor Masini, 1625 and 1665, and the expression *examen rigorosum* was applied to two at least of these stages. If the examiners did not think the accused was telling the truth, or if they wanted to be sure of his telling the truth, or if they could not get him to confess what they wanted him to confess, they threatened him with torture, apparently being bound to get in some way the answer they wanted, like the milder Third Degree in our police courts. They did not remember that under torture the accused might involuntarily say anything desired simply to get rid of intolerable suffering. But they did not go the full length at once. First, they threatened with torture. Then if that did not suffice, they led the accused from the judgment hall to the torture chamber, where he was shown the instruments of torture and the modes of their application. If that did not get the required answer, they undressed the accused, bound him (or her), brought him to the very side of the rack, there to be again awed, questioned, and threatened. If he still persisted in the assertion of his innocence, he was bound upon the rack (or whatever the instrument was) and actually tortured. Now the *examen rigorosum* with which Galileo was threatened, included both the threat in the judgment hall and these preliminary stages in the torture chamber. It appears, however, that no one could be actually tortured in the Inquisition examination unless (1) the judges came to a formal resolution to do so, and unless (2) a physician should examine the accused, in case he demanded it, as to whether he could undergo the torture without peril to life. Now, in regard to Galileo all we can say is that he was threatened with the *examen rigorosum,* and this may have meant either the verbal threat in the hall of the court or the *territio realis,* or the further threat with its dark accompaniments in the torture chamber. Wohlwill, who studied all the documents with great care, comes to the conclusion that some of the documents have been tampered with, and that Galileo actually endured the *territio realis* and possibly a slight torturing.[4] The late Professor Reusch, of the University of Bonn, who also examined this whole history with patience, exhaustive research, and judicial mind,[5] is of the opinion that Galileo was only threatened with torture, which threat might have gone as far as the *territio realis,* but that he was not actually tortured. Otherwise he would hardly have been in a condition to read his recantation in the church, June 22, and a fortnight later to walk four Italian miles. Schanz also makes this quite plain[6] as does also von Gebler in the work I have mentioned (pp. 253-63). The torturing of Galileo is a fable. The aged scientist was threatened with torture, and that threat sometimes went as far as an initiation into the torture chamber, which to a sensitive mind would amount to a kind of torture. As to anything further the documents do not allow us to say.

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[4] *Ist Galilei Gefoltert worden? Ein kritische Studie*, Leipz., 1877.

[5] *Der Process Galileis und die Jesuiten*, 1879, and in long article in the *Contemporary Review*, October, 1880 (vol. xxxviii, pp. 664–98).

[6] Art. "Galileo," in Wetzer and Welte, *Kirchenlexikon*, 2 Aufl. 5. 38–9 (1888).

I have already spoken of the examination of the 21st of June, when the judges decided in spite of his protests that he was under suspicion of heresy in publishing his book, which they interpreted as teaching heresy and as involving him thus in reasonable and grave suspicions of heresy. The next day in the Church of the Santa Maria Sopra Minerva sentence was pronounced against him. It declared that Galileo had in the highest degree incurred suspicion of maintaining and believing the false and Scripture-contradicting doctrine of the sun being the center of the world, and not moving from east to west, and of the earth moving and not being the center of the world; and of having held and defended this opinion even after it had been declared opposed to Scripture; consequently, Galileo has fallen under all the censures and punishments appointed by the holy canons and other constitutions for such offenses. He may, however, be absolved from them by recanting, condemning and abhorring the said errors and heresies and all others; but in order that he shall not remain wholly unpunished, and should in future be more careful, and to afford an example to others, the *Dialogue* is to be prohibited, and Galileo sentenced to imprisonment for a period appointed by the Holy Office, and the wholesome penance laid on him of weekly repeating during the next three years the Seven Penitential Psalms.

Immediately after, that is, in the church on the same occasion, Galileo read the following Recantation on his knees: "I swear that I always have believed, do now believe, with God's help ever shall believe all that the holy Catholic apostolic Roman Church holds, preaches, and teaches. I am, however, declared by this Holy Office to be nevertheless suspected of heresy in that I have believed the sun to be the center of the world and immovable. Therefore in order to remove this well-founded suspicion from your Eminence and every Catholic Christian I recant, I abjure, and condemn with sincere heart and genuine faith the aforesaid errors and heresies, and all other errors and sects contrary to the aforesaid Holy Church; and I swear that in future I will never either in writing or by word of mouth say or assert anything that may bring me under similar suspicion; but that, rather, I will, should I meet with anyone heretically minded or to be suspected of heresy, denounce him to this Holy Office or to the Inquisition or bishop of my place of abode; and further I vow that I will perfectly fulfill all penances that this Holy Office has imposed or may impose on me. Should I—which may God forbid—in any way break these my promises, assurances and solemn vows, I subject myself to all the punishments which holy Canons and other General or special Congregations have provided and promulgated for such offenses. So help me God and his Holy Gospel, which I now hold in my hands."[7]

There is a legend that after reading this recantation, Galileo muttered *E pur si muove* (But it moves after all), a motto which has been adopted by the liberal publishers, Williams and Norgate, of London. This legend is not only improbable in itself, since repeated solemn declarations of Galileo as to his orthodoxy show that to such a thoroughly timid and subdued soul such a protest even in a whisper in a crisis so solemn and so fearfully dangerous would have been impossible, but it is also shown to be false by its history, as it goes back no further than 1774 (one authority says 1761).

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[7] These two famous documents—the Condemnation and the Recantation—are in Italian, and can be read in the collections of the Galileo trial documents by von Gebler in his *Galileo Galilei und Römische Curia*, 1876, and his *Die Acten des Galileischen Processes*, Stuttgart, 1877 (the important ones in English in the London edition), in L'Epinois, *Les Pièces du Procès de Galilei precêdés d'un avant Propos*, Paris 1877, and in the appendices to W. W. Roberts, *The Pontifical Decrees against the Doctrine of the Earth's Movement*, London, 1885.

Galileo was now free from all suspicion of heresy. He had not only denied that he held the Copernican theories, but he made a recantation in view of the fact that the Inquisition said that his writings justly laid him open to the suspicion of holding them. Was he allowed his freedom now that he was doubly absolved? Not at all. In some countries and times the Inquisition would have imprisoned in their dungeons for life or for a long time a man in Galileo's case—that is, a man who had cleared himself from heresy—but in 1633 and in Italy and for a man of Galileo's standing that was not possible. Still a degree of punishment must be his, even after he is absolved, such was the Church of Rome's conception of mercy and of justice. He was sentenced to be held prisoner by the Inquisition at its pleasure. This did not mean that he must be kept in durance vile, but it did mean that he was now under their control as to his person and movements. He was allowed to go to the house of the Florence ambassador in Rome. He soon addressed a petition to the Pope that on account of his illness, and of the arrival of a sister with eight children for whom he had to provide, he be allowed to return to Florence. This was not granted, but he was allowed to go to Siena, about thirty miles south of Florence. He must report himself to the archbishop there, and not leave the town without written permission of the Inquisition.

On the 6th of July, 1633, Galileo left Rome and arrived in Siena on the 9th—a journey that could now be taken in a couple of hours. Here he renewed his efforts for permission to return to Florence, in which he was seconded by the Florence ambassador, but in vain. However, in December of that year, after keeping Galileo in

Siena six months, they allowed him to go to his villa at Arcetri, near Florence, under the condition of receiving no visitors. On March 23, 1634, the ambassador made a request that on account of increasing infirmities and illness Galileo be allowed to return to Florence where he could get medical attendance more readily. This request was not only refused, but the Florence inquisitors were told to inform Galileo that he must present no more requests, or they would bring him back to Rome and imprison him there. In the following years influential men labored to obtain Galileo's freedom. In December, 1637, he became blind. He ventured to send a petition to the Holy Office asking for mercy on account of his blindness and his need of medical care. Then the Inquisition asked the Florence ambassador to report on Galileo's health, and as to whether a return to Florence would lead to meetings and conversations in which the condemned doctrine of the earth's motion might be revived. The Florence inquisitor reported on February 13, 1638, as follows:

> I found him perfectly blind. He does, indeed, hope for recovery, the cataract having formed during the last six months, but the doctor thinks the case hopeless because of his age and the bad state of his health. He suffers, moreover, from a bad rupture, from constant pains, and such sleeplessness that, as his household assure me, he does not sleep one whole hour of the four and twenty. He is in so wretched a plight as to resemble a corpse more than a living man. The villa is far from the town and not easily reached, so that Galileo can only occasionally and with a good deal of trouble and expense obtain medical assistance. . . . Should his Holiness allow him to live in Florence he will, I believe, have no opportunity for social intercourse, and if he had, he is grown so humble that an expressed admonition will be found sufficient.

Here is a man whose only heresy had been the Copernican astronomy, which every intelligent Catholic in the world now believes, but who had cleared himself from that heresy, who is seventy-four years old, who is blind, sick, and helpless, but whom the Holy Inquisition, though it has now no claim upon him in justice or in mercy, controls in his every step, and for years prevents from receiving adequate medical care!

On the 9th of March, 1638, however, the Holy Office permitted him to return to his home in Florence, but on two conditions: (1) He should not pay any visits in the town, but be a prisoner in his own house, and (2) no conversations should be held there on the Copernican opinions. He was also to be watched, and any infringement of these conditions should be punished by excommunication and close imprisonment for life. What a state of society that was under the benign rule of the Church of Rome when a man was watched by an ever-present eye, and could make no move except by permission. And all that so late as 1638 in beautiful and cultured Florence.

As Easter, 1638, was approaching, a devout Catholic like Galileo wanted to hear mass and confess. To do this he had to get the special permission of the Inquisition.

On the 26th of June, 1638, the inquisitor at Florence reported that a Dutch general had been sent by the States to give a present to Galileo and to confer with him on the measuring of longitudes at sea. Would the Holy Office permit this? This was their reply: "If this German savant is a heretic, or comes from a heretical town, he must not see Galileo; if both he and his city are Catholic he might do so, on the condition that the Copernican theories are not to be treated." The visit was never paid.

After a time the Inquisition permitted Galileo to converse on scientific subjects with his friends, if he did not broach these forbidden theories. These were under the ban of that church that professed to be the only true

Church of God who made the universe, and who made it according to laws which she affirmed were heretical and false.

Toward the end of 1638 Galileo was compelled apparently by the church to return to his villa Arcetri, and he never left it. Among the documents of that time published by Gherardi we find a final appeal, April 27, 1639, for pardon and a final refusal by the Pope. So he died a prisoner, watched to the last by minions of the Inquisition.

After this history one can estimate the statement of the Rev. Dr. Reuben Parsons, a learned Roman Catholic advocate, that Galileo's imprisonment was merely nominal.[8] It was nominal so far as being shut up in a jail was concerned, but it was only too real so far as personal liberty was concerned.

During these last years he kept up his scientific studies with indomitable perseverance, in spite of blindness and sickness. Just before he became blind he discovered the moon's monthly and annual librations.

He died January 8, 1642, aged nearly seventy-eight, after receiving the sacrament, in the presence of his son, and of two of his pupils, Viviani and Torricelli.

In his will he desired to be laid in the family vault in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence. This was not permitted, but the Inquisition allowed him to be buried in a side chapel of that church. Then the question of a monument came up. The Inquisition discouraged this but did not forbid it, only nothing must be said on the inscription that would trench upon the reputation of the Holy Office. Under these discouragements the grave of one of the most eminent scientists in history was left unmarked for a hundred years. How different the reception given to the remains of his great unbelieving successor of the nineteenth century, who was buried with the highest honors in Westminster Abbey! I refer to Charles Darwin, who was not a Christian and not even a theist, but who deserved all his honors by the nobility of his life and his unsurpassed devotion to truth in the physical world. About a hundred years after Galileo's death it was proposed again to erect a monument to him in the Church of Santa Croce, money having been left for that purpose. Again the Inquisition insisted that the inscription should be sent to Rome to be viséd by them. Here the documents of the prosecution close. Schanz says that in 1737 the remains were solemnly transferred to the new mausoleum in the Santa Croce Church.[9]

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[8] *Some Lies and Errors of History*, Notre Dame, Ind., 1893, pp. 80ff.

For a long time the Roman Church insisted that her condemnation of the Copernican astronomy should stand. Orders were sent to Catholic colleges forbidding professors there to teach views thus officially condemned as heretical. In the eighteenth century came a relaxation of the prohibition, as even through the thick skin of the Roman leviathan a little light penetrated. The prohibition of all books teaching the true system of the universe was kept upon the Index until Benedict XIV (1740-58) struck them out or made modifications. The prohibitions of the original edition of Copernicus, and of the *Dialogue* of Galileo remained in force until the nineteenth century. As late as 1820 a book by Professor Settele was rejected by the censor because it taught the Copernican system. Settele appealed to the higher ecclesiastical authorities, and they reversed the decision of the censor, and the Pope confirmed the reversal, September 25, 1822. All honor to Pius VII, who was willing that astronomy should be taught according to its own laws, and who in effect thus made false the decrees of his predecessors. But remember that almost within the memory of men now living it was heresy and damnable error to teach that the earth went around the sun. 1822

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[9] *Kirchenlexikon*, 2d ed., vol. v, col. 42.

—wonderful year that! It emancipated science for Roman Catholics.

In the next edition of the *Index Expurgatorius* (1835) the books of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo were omitted.

Roman Catholic writers have tried in various ways to break the force of the foregoing statement, every point in which rests upon unimpeachable contemporary evidence, as given by Gherardi, Gebler, Reusch, etc. In every essential particular the Roman Catholic scholar Schanz in his elaborate Galileo article in Wetzer und Welte gives the story exactly as does Reusch. It is said, for instance, that it was only the scriptural or religious side of Copernicanism which the church forbade, not the scientific, whereas it was the movement of the earth that was condemned. It is said that Copernicanism was only restricted within the bounds of an hypothesis, whereas teaching it in any way was forbidden for two hundred years. It is said that there was no proof of Copernicanism in 1616, whereas between 1592 and 1610 Galileo had proved it, while Kepler was doing the same thing, and by 1609 had sent forth his celebrated laws of planetory motion. It is said that it was the church's jealousy for Scripture which led her in this case, whereas the church did not forbid simply interpretations of Scripture, but the movement of the earth as a physical fact. It is said that it was Galileo's trenchant manner of writing which caused the trouble, but the church condemned not his style, but astronomical facts. Finally, it is said that the anti-Galileo decrees were not infallible, because they were not the solemn utterances of the Pope teaching the Universal Church *ex cathedra,* but of Congregations indorsed by the Pope. Technically, the Roman Church thus saves her face. But she does not really save it. The church is either infallible in her doctrinal teachings or she is not. If she is, when by her appointed officers, after careful deliberation, she sets forth a doctrinal or ethical decision which is henceforth binding in the conscience—a decision which could not thus be valid unless indorsed by the Pope either formally or indirectly —she ought to be saved by the Holy Spirit from teaching error. Such was her decision in this case. It is a subterfuge which throws it aside now. Roman arguments have been thoroughly met by Roberts in his able book. Roman controversialists are pastmasters in that legerdemain by which they eat their cake and have it too—the church infallible when they want it to be and not infallible when they don't want it to be. The decree of the Pope received by the Congregation of the Inquisition on March 3, 1616, and published by the Congregation of the Index two days later, and which brands the Copernican theory of the movement of the earth, etc., as false and opposed to Scripture and damaging to Catholic truth, is referred to in the decree of the Inquisition of June 22, 1633, as a "declaration made by our Lord the Pope promulgated by the Sacred Congregation of the Index," the nonobservance of which was pronounced "heresy." This disposes of the plea that these Congregational decrees sanctioned by the Pope do not bind the church in matters of doctrine. Besides, it has been shown that Pius VI made it clear that decrees of the Congregation of the Index were dogmatic decrees of the Chair of Saint Peter.[10] Yes, in the Galileo case the church put forth a decree scientifically false and doctrinally erroneous, and this chapter tells the story.

What is the chief point of damnableness of the Galileo case? It is not that there fell another victim to the Inquisition and the church's system of persecution. If Galileo taught heresy, he had no more right to escape than a peasant. It was not that he was threatened with torture and that he was imprisoned. Thousands better than he had been put to death by his church, and many more were yet to be. No, it was not that. The perniciousness of the church's action was twofold.

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[10] *Church Quarterly Review*, London, July, 1881, pp. 548–49; Roberts, pp. 70–75; Reusch, pp. 674, 683.

(1) It decided a scientific question on theological grounds instead of on its own grounds. It placed an embargo on all progress in science on the part of Catholic scholars, and at the same time loaded the Bible with a false interpretation. As late as 1806 a Roman Catholic scholar of Milan, Pini, published a book in which he defended the Ptolemaic astronomy, and tried to prove that the earth does not move. St. George Mivart a distinguished Catholic scientist, said in the *Nineteenth Century,* July, 1885, that he knew two London priests who were anti-Copernicans, and were so because they believed the church is committed to the Ptolemaic theory. The Roman Catholic Quarterly, the *Dublin Review,* January, 1886, p. 276, praises those who raise doubts concerning Copernicanism, for "it still admits of doubt." It was not uncommon a few years ago for illiterate people to ridicule the idea that the earth goes round the sun, and they sometimes objected to teachers instructing children to the contrary, but for priests and other learned Catholics to live in the science of the Middle Ages is a striking revelation of the influence of their church. The proceedings of the church in the Galileo case wrought havoc to both Bible and science by not daring to trust God in his own world. The same thing was true when Protestants and Catholics cried out, "The Bible is in danger," when Darwin published his *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in November, 1859, and his other epoch-making book, *The Descent of Man,* in 1871. The questions in these books refer to the laws by which God works. They are simply questions of fact. Catholic and Protestant must remember that all truth is divine, and no fact can be excommunicated. Nor can it

contradict revelation, because both have the same author, though, of course, our interpretation may be at fault.

(2) Persecuting measures react to destroy the self-respect and love of truth of the persecuted. It is impossible to believe that a scientist like Galileo would have repudiated his Copernicanism if he had not been driven to it by the Inquisition. His recantation, therefore, must always rest under the suspicion of dishonesty. In other words, the church compelled him to believe and act a lie. As the late Professor W. Möller, of Kiel, says: "It was not the recantation as such which was the most painful thing in this unheroic martyrdom, but the fact that this recantation was only the sealing of the lie of his life—a lie held on to for years and yet transparent to everyone. For his abjuration was not pressed out of him by the threat of torture, but was only the sworn repetition of his earlier assurances that he was obedient to the faith of the church, assurances which he must now have the courage to hold fast to even under that threat of torture which was to bring him eventually to a confession of heretical intention."[11] That is the damnableness of persecution—its too frequent destruction of soul integrity and of absolute devotion to truth. For though many men are like Galileo in their excellent qualities and Christianity, many more are like him in not being heroes. But a large part of the guilt of this false life must be set down to the persecutor.

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[11] *Theol. Literaturzeitung*, 1880, col. 366.

CHAPTER XI

WAS WESLEY A PREMILLENNIALIST?

Two pamphlets in my library much interested me—one by the Rev. Dr. Nathaniel West, a Presbyterian, *John Wesley and Premillennialism,* 1894, 48 pages, and the other by the Rev. C. Munger on the same theme. West proves that he was a premillennialist and Munger that he was not. Without having regard to these, I desire to work up the subject impartially from the sources for myself.

In sermon 15, "The Great Assize," 1758, Wesley gives the events which precede the General Judgment. He says the earth is to be destroyed, heavens to pass away, the dead to arise, Christ to come, and the General Judgment to ensue. He seems to take literally all the figurative expressions of Scripture describing these things. Here the outlook is not at all premillennial, but the Coming is associated not with another reign of Christ in earth, but with his return to wind up all events.[1]

In sermon 60, "The General Deliverance" (Rom. 8. 19-22), Wesley indulges in his well-known views of the final restoration of animals to happiness, and to the liberty of all the children of God according to their measure. Here is an excellent opportunity to bring in the millennial reign of Christ on earth when this paradisaical condition will take place. But he does not. He simply takes literally the numerous passages of Old and New Testaments bearing on the harmony of the whole creation without dovetailing them into any scheme of the Coming whether pre- or postmillennial.[2]

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[1] Wesley, *Works*, London, 14-vol. ed., v, pp. 172–73.

[2] *Ibid.*, vi, pp. 241-52.

Wesley has a realistic sermon, "The Mystery of Iniquity," in which, with his accustomed frankness, he turns the light of fact on the moral condition of the world. His picture is certainly gloomy enough to suit the most pessimistic premillenarian. Here was an excellent opportunity for him to bring in the Coming of Christ as the answer to this deterioration, to punish these evildoers, reign a thousand years at Jerusalem, after which shall come the end. But he omits all this. There is, indeed, to be a betterment: "God will arise and maintain his own cause, and the whole creation shall then be delivered both from moral and natural corruption." But it is not a part of a Second Coming scheme.[3]

One sermon has the attractive title, "The End of Christ's Coming," and we naturally turn to it for light. We find it refers entirely to Christ's first coming, which was, he says, to "destroy the works of the devil." There is no indication that he cannot do it, but must come again in order to accomplish it. "He is able, he is willing, to destroy it [sin, the chief work of the devil] now, in all that believe in him." Wesley urges all to put him "to the proof."[4]

There is an engaging sermon, "The General Spread of the Gospel (no. 63), one of the most interesting Wesley ever preached. The first part of it is taken up with his favorite thesis, namely, how little real religion there is in the world. Even the so-called Christian world is far from being really Christian. Then he quotes the promises about the Son having the heathen for his inheritance, and the knowledge of God covering the world. We might suppose he would come forward with the premillennial program of the sudden Coming of Christ to punish this corruption and to bring in the Kingdom. But he does not. To help faith in God's promises that there is to be a better day he refers to the history of his own Movement: "Let us observe what God has already done. Between fifty or sixty years ago God raised a few young men," etc. It spread through England, north Britain, Ireland, America, Nova Scotia, etc. He believes it will go on. "May it not spread first through the remaining provinces; then through the isles of North America, from England to Holland, where there is already a blessed work in Utrecht, Haarlem, and many other cities. Probably it will spread from these to the Protestants in France, to those in Germany, and those in Switzerland, then to Sweden, Denmark, Russia; and all other Protestant nations in Europe." After that he is hopeful that it will touch the Catholics who live in these countries, and that as a prelude to strictly Catholic countries, "those countries that are merely Popish," as Italy, Spain, Portugal. "And may it not be gradually diffused from these to all that name the name of Christ in the various provinces of Turkey, in Abyssinia, yea, and in the remotest parts, not only of Europe, but of Asia, Africa, and America?"

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[3] Wesley, *Works*, London, 14-vol. ed., vi, pp. 253–67 (Sermon no. 61).

[4] *Ibid.*, vi, pp. 267–77 (no. 62).

Wesley's philosophy of the spread of Christianity is not the premillennial thought of a *coup d'état* from heaven, the sudden influx of Christ and angels from above on this earthly scene, but the natural influence of real Christianity as shown in lives of love and devotion on heathen and the near-heathen. His point is that pagan nations have not seen genuine Christianity at work yet; when they do see it they will respond perhaps in vast numbers. The work is to be done by human messengers in this dispensation: in case of absolute necessity by divine transportation of the messenger as in the case of Philip in Acts 8. In any case, the earth is to be filled with the knowledge of God, and it is to be done as it was done in England under Wesley and his co-workers. No Second Coming to inaugurate a millennium is postulated. The promises are taken at their full face value, but they are fulfilled by agencies now at work in the world. The thing is already begun. "All unprejudiced persons may see with their eyes that he is already renewing the face of the earth. And we have strong reason to hope that the work he hath begun he will carry on unto the day of the Lord Jesus; that he will never intermit this blessed work of his Spirit until he has fulfilled all his promises, until he hath put a period to sin, misery, infirmity, and death, and re-established universal holiness and happiness,"[5] etc.

Another striking sermon is "The New Creation"—"Behold, I make all things new," Rev. 21. 5 (no. 64). It is full of those historical references and literary quotations with which Wesley loved to illuminate his discourses, and which help to give them their permanent appeal. The sermon offered an excellent chance to exploit any views of Christ's Coming to make all things new, to restore the world to nobler ways, to inaugurate the reign of the saints, to sit on a throne in Jerusalem or Mount Sinai, etc. But these things do not seem to have entered his head. Wesley interprets the words of the new universe which shall succeed the present one, that is, after this present frame of things, this solar system, shall have passed away, shall have been burned up. In other words, it is long after the supposed premillennial reign of Christ, on which, as I said, he is silent. There is to be literally a new earth, having no earthquakes, no meteors, no bad weather, everything fair, equable, livable—the earth as sweet and good as its inhabitants. He seems to be thinking of this universe after the end of all things as a part of heaven, as fitted up for the saints. "There will be a greater deliverance than all this [that is, than from grief, pain, sickness, etc.], for there will be no more sin. And, to crown all, there will be a deep, an intimate, an uninterrupted union with God, a constant communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit, a continual enjoyment of the Three-One God, and of all the creatures in him!" But, in any case, there is no hint of the Coming.[6] Think of a modern premillennialist preaching on "I shall make all things new" without bringing in his view of the personal reign of Christ with his saints in the earth for a thousand years before the final consummation.

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[5] Wesley, *Works*, London, 14-vol. ed., vi, pp. 277–88.

Sermon 66 has also a taking title to one who believes in the near Return of the Lord to set up his Kingdom—"The Signs of the Times." He will read it with avidity to see whether Wesley has any vision of the coming glory in the events of which he was an acute observer. But here again Wesley was living in other thoughts. He says the times of which our Lord was speaking in Matt. 16. 3 were the times of the Messiah, and he (Wesley) gives certain historic facts by which the Jews ought to have known that the Messiah was really there. And then he turns to speak of the times which were then at hand when he was preaching this sermon, the times whose chief significance was not the near Coming of Christ, but the presence and power of his own Movement, whose significance the high dignitaries in church and state did not recognize, did not discern the sign of the times. He follows this with certain characteristics of the Movement which ought to have convinced them that it was of God. The absence of any trace in the sermon of signs of the Coming is significant of Wesley's preoccupation with other things. In fact as an evidence how little his consciousness was premillennial (if I might so put it), in all the five series of sermons published in the London 14-vol. edition of his *Works,* including one hundred and forty-one sermons in all, there is not one on the Second Coming. I have canvassed all those which might seem indirectly to bear on it, with the result already given. For the millennial reign it is not reassuring.

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[6] *Ibid.*, vi, pp. 288–96.

Let us now take up Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament,* which with forty-four of his *Sermons* he made standards of doctrine for his preachers.

Matt. 16. 27-28. "Come in his glory": "For there is no way to escape the righteous judgment of God," where he associates the Coming with Judgment and not with a new dispensation on earth. "Not taste of death": "And as an emblem of this there are some who shall live to see the Messiah coming to set up his mediatorial kingdom with great power of glory, by the increase of his church, and the destruction of the Temple, city and polity of the Jews." Matt. 24. 1-28: Wesley refers this to destruction of the Temple, etc., and also verse 34. Matt. 24. 29-51 he refers largely to the Second Coming of Christ, but he makes no comments in a premillennial sense. "Of that day . . . knoweth no man": "the day of Judgment." The Coming is a Coming to judgment. Just so with Matt. 25: the Judgment.

Mark 13. 32. "Of that day . . . knoweth": "The day of Judgment is emphatically called *that day."*

Luke 10. 18. "Satan as lightning fall": Not referred to the millennium. "That is, when ye went forth, I saw the kingdom of Satan, which was hightly exalted, swiftly and suddenly cast down."

Heb. 9. 28. "Shall he appear the second time": "When he comes to Judgment."

Rev. 5. 10. "And we shall reign on the earth": "The new earth; herewith agree the golden crowns of the elders. The reign of the saints in general follows under the trumpet of the seventh angel: particularly after the first resurrection as also in eternity."

Before I take up the famous Rev. 20. 1-9, I might say that I have looked up about forty-five passages in the New Testament where the Coming of Christ is referred to directly or indirectly, and where if anywhere definite teaching of a commentator as to that Coming would inevitably appear, and I have to say that Wesley nowhere comes out in a premillenarian sense. He speaks in a general way, or he connects the Coming with the Last Day and General Judgment, which is the ordinary (postmillennial) view, as expressed in the Apostles' Creed. This scrutiny of his *Notes*, confirms the *Sermons,* shows how little he had of the premillennial mind, which sees everywhere some trace of the favorite view. If any man was free from crotchets, vagaries, obsessions, in regard to the Coming (or, in fact, any other doctrine) it was Wesley. He believed in the Second Coming as an actual thing, he related it to the End and the Judgment, that is, he stood with the general New Testament and Church view, but in regard to it he kept the proportion and analogy of faith. This was in general characteristic of Wesley. He rode no hobbies.

This is all the more striking when you take Wesley's general attitude toward Scripture. He was what some would call a literalist. Of course he recognized figurative expressions in the Bible, but he took the latter with tremendous seriousness as the very word of God. He believed that it was not only inspired, but that God "inspires," that is, as he explains it, "supernaturally assists" those "who read it with earnest prayer" (on 2 Tim. 3. 16). His whole attitude of mind toward the Bible is that of the utmost respect and reverence. It was the very type of mind most likely to be captivated by the premillennialist point of view. Therefore we are the more surprised in our findings. When such a mind comes to Rev. 20, we need not be taken back if some of the ideas of the eminent and pious expositor, Bengel, whom he follows in his *Notes* on this book, and who (he says) first taught him to understand it—and especially the middle sections of it, and who was a moderate premillenarian, we need not be taken back, I say, if in Rev. 20 something of Bengel's views filters through.

Let us turn, then, to the famous premillenarian stronghold, Rev. 20. 1-10 (follow the text for yourself), certainly one of the most difficult passages in that knotty book, and read Wesley's comments. (I omit parts that have no bearing on Wesley's view.)

> "And I saw an angel come down out of heaven." Coming down with a commission from God. Jesus Christ himself overthrew the beast [which Wesley seems to interpret as papal Rome]; the proud dragon [the devil] shall be bound by an angel, even as he and his angels were cast out of heaven by Michael and his angels. "And he laid hold on the dragon," with whom undoubtedly his angels were now cast into the bottomless pit, as well as finally into everlasting fire, Matt. 25. 41. "And bound him a thousand years." That these thousand do not precede or run parallel with, but wholly follow the times of the beast may manifestly appear: 1. From the series in the whole book, representing one continued change of events. 2. From the circumstances which precede. The woman's bringing forth is followed by the casting of the dragon out of heaven to the earth, with this is connected the third woe, whereby the dragon through and with the beast rages horribly. At the conclusion of the third woe the beast is overthrown and cast into the lake of fire. At the same time the other grand enemy shall be bound and shut up. 3. These thousand years bring a new, full, and lasting immunity from all outward and inward evils (the authors of which are now removed), and an affluence of all blessings. But such a time the church has never yet seen. Therefore it is still to come. 4. These thousand years are followed by the last times of the world, the letting loose of Satan, who gathers together Gog and Magog, and is thrown with the beast and false prophet in the lake of fire. [What is thrown with the beast? Apparently Satan.] Now, Satan's accusing the saints in heaven, his rage on earth, his imprisonment in the abyss, his seducing Gog and Magog, and being cast into the lake of fire, evidently succeeded each other. 5. What occurs from chapter 20. 11 to chapter 22. 5 manifestly follows the things related in the nineteenth chapter. The thousand years came between [between what?]; whereas if they were past, neither the beginning nor the end of them would fall within this period. [What period? There seems a slight confusion here.]

> In a short time those who assert that they are now at hand will appear to have spoken the truth. Meantime let every man consider what kind of happiness he expects therein. The danger does not lie in maintaining that the thousand years are yet to come, but in interpreting them, whether past or to come, in a gross and carnal sense. The doctrine of the Son of God is a mystery. So is his cross, and so is his glory. In all these he is a sign that is spoken against. Happy they who believe and confess him in all.[7] (Other quotations as I go on.)

Here Wesley expects a period of prosperity for Zion, and freedom from evils. But they are "now at hand." Apparently, they are going on under his eyes. Perhaps Methodism was an evidence of this. Any literal interpretation he seems to disown (what he calls a "gross and carnal sense"). As to details he asks (on verse 3), "How far these expressions are to be taken literally, how far figuratively only, who can tell?" That is, he leaves room for figurative interpretation. The whole teaching here, he says, is a mystery, like all of Christianity. The thousand years have not started just yet, but a knowledge of the things which they mean "becomes every day more distinct and easy." Apparently, the thousand years will come without observation. They are heralded by no Coming of Christ. Without naming it Wesley seems really to have here the postmillennial theory; that is, that the millennium will go on here without any spectacular inauguration as by a Personal Visible Coming, but by an "easy" transition. For he says distinctly that it is only after the thousand years, when evil lifts up its head again and rages against the saints and even martyrs them, that, he says, "then follow his Coming in glory, the new heavens, the new earth and new Jerusalem" (on verse 3). There will be the millennium, the thousand years are a fact, but they occur in the ordinary processes of history, except that the forces of good will triumph ("Satan is bound"), leading up to resurgence of iniquity (loosening of Satan), and finally (see below) the real Coming and the Judgment. "How great things these! And how short the time! What is needful for us? Wisdom, patience, faithfulness, watchfulness. It is no time to settle upon our lees. This is not an acceptable message to the wise, the mighty, the honorable of this world. Yet that which is to be done shall be done. There is no counsel against the Lord" (on verse 2).

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[7] *Notes* on Rev. 20. 1, 2.

However, according to Wesley, there are two millennia. We have just seen the first. After it closes, the thousand years of Rev. 20. 4 begins; that is, the one in which the beheaded martyrs and those who had not worshiped the beast will reign not on earth, but in heaven "with Christ a thousand years" (verse 4). This second thousand is synchronous with the loosening of Satan, the waxing of evil on the earth. But the beginning of neither of these two eras, he says, is perceptible to us here ("neither will be known to men upon the earth," on verse 5), as the binding and loosing of Satan are spiritual facts "transacted in the invisible world." We know only the results in the reign of good and evil respectively.

If you read carefully Rev. 20, you will notice that the sacred writer does not dovetail the Second Coming into either the first or second thousand years (if there are two); in fact, he does not mention the Coming at all. Neither does Wesley, except if you compare a little remark about the "Coming in glory" in his comments on verse 3 with what he says on verses 4 and 5, you will see that Wesley was really a post-millennialist, as the Coming, according to this almost incidental remark, was to take place only after these two millennia. In other words, Wesley took at its full face value Rev. 20, believed thoroughly in the truth of every sentence, though was doubtful as between literal and figurative interpretation, and in any case made the Coming after the progress (first millennium) and decline (second millennium) of Christianity. I am really unable to discover, therefore, any special divergence between his comments on Rev. 20 and his teachings in *Sermons* and *Notes.*

One or two passages remain. Thomas Hartley was an Episcopal minister at Winwick, Northampton. He wrote a book, *Paradise Restored: A Testimony to the Doctrine of the Blessed Millennium. With some Considerations on its Approaching Advent. To which is Added, A Short Defense of Mystical Writers* (1764). The mystical part Wesley did not like, as appears from his *Journal,* February 5, 1764, and he wrote a letter to Hartley defending himself from a certain criticism by that writer, which letter he published in his *Magazine,* 1783, p. 499. But the millenarian part of the book Wesley liked, either in whole or in part. For he wrote to him in the same letter: "Your book on the millennium was lately put into my hands. I cannot but thank you for your strong and reasonable confirmation of that comfortable doctrine, of which I cannot entertain the least doubt, as long as I believe the Bible."[8] Now, Hartley was a full premillennialist of the regular stripe, and Tyerman thinks that this letter shows that "in substance" his views were shared by Wesley. In my judgment, that depends on the meaning of "in substance." What does Wesley say? (1) That he is thankful for Hartley's confirmation of the comfortable doctrine of a millennium, not for his arguments, his points, the length to which he goes, but only for his confirmation of a doctrine. What that doctrine is Wesley does not define here, because, so far as he ever did define it, he had already done so in his *Notes to the New Testament* (1754), as we have seen. The millennium for him was a period of blessing, progress, and triumph of morality and Christianity (that was the "in substance"), but it was not the Coming of Christ, nor his

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[8] *Methodist Magazine,* 1783, p. 498; Tyerman, *Wesley,* vol. ii, p. 523.

Visible Bodily Reign. This brief noncommittal letter is to be interpreted by his comments on Rev. 20. Tyerman has drawn too large an inference. I suspect he had not made a careful study of these comments.

Tyerman is also slightly disingenuous in regard to what Wesley says about Justin Martyr's views on the millennium. After giving these views Tyerman quotes Wesley as saying that they are the views of the Bible. Wesley does not give Justin's views at all (in spite of the inference of Tyerman, vol. ii, 524), but gives the "doctrine" which "Justin deduced from prophets and apostles," to the effect, says Wesley, that "the souls of those who have been martyred for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and who have not worshiped the beast, neither received his mark, shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead shall not live again until the thousand years are finished. And that they believed this, is neither more nor less than to say they believed the Bible."[9] In other words, Wesley does not deny or affirm Justin's views, much less define what they were, but quotes a passage or two from Rev. 20 as the "doctrine which he deduced from prophets and apostles," and adds the innocent remark that in this he believed the Bible!

There is also a short anonymous article in Wesley's *Arminian Magazine,* 1784, in which it is said that the position of the earth in regard to the celestial bodies was changed by the fall of men, that upon the triumph of Messiah or his second Coming, the earth is to be restored to its primitive paradisaical form, situation, and splendor, although not restored to such an ethereal and angelic state as it will be at the restoration of all things.[10] This is certainly an interesting view and may have been shared more or less by Wesley, but he left it up in the air, so to speak, that is, he did not vouch for it sufficiently to put his name to it.

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[9] *Works,* vol. x, p. 31.

[10] *Arminian Magazine,* 1784, pp. 154, 210.

Finally, it is a fact that Wesley preached a sermon in Bradford in 1788 (three years before he died), which made rumors spread through the kingdom that he was expecting the end of the world, as we know Luther did toward the end of his life. One of the best of his preachers, Hopper, wrote him and asked him what he really said. Wesley replied as follows:

> *My dear Brother:* I said nothing, less or more in Bradford church concerning the end of the world, neither concerning my own opinion, but what follows: That Bengelius had given it as his opinion, not that the world would *end*, but that the millennial reign of Christ would *begin*, in the year 1836. I have no opinion at all upon that head; I determine nothing about it. These calculations are far above, out of my sight. I have only one thing to do—to save my soul and those that hear me. I am,
>
> Yours affectionately, JOHN WESLEY.[11]

Let me say in closing that several hymns of Charles Wesley are quoted to show that he was a premillennialist.[12] I have read all these. They are rapturous expectations of the Return, or vivid pictures of it in Bible language, or hymns on the Coming that could be interpreted either way, and show only that the Wesleys took the New Testament seriously and therefore fully believed in the real Coming and joyfully expected it. The one that comes nearest perhaps to the premillennial hope is the famous hymn, "Lo! He comes," though I do not see why any believer in the Coming might not sing it.

"Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain!
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of his train.
Hallelujah!
God appears on earth to reign."

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[11] *Methodist Magazine*, 1827, 392; *Works*, vol. xii, p. 298.

[12] See West, *John Wesley and Premillennialism*, pp. 40–44.

That grand old hymn even appears in our *Hymnal* (1905), and you may be sure there were no premillennialists on the committee which compiled that book. Other verses are quoted, but they are also equally acceptable to all Christians.

> "O might we quickly find
> The place for us designed!
> See the long expected day
> Of our full redemption here!
> Let the shadows flee away,
> Let the new-made world appear!
> High on thy great white throne,
> O King of saints, come down!
> In the New Jerusalem
> Now triumphantly descend,
> Let the final trump proclaim
> Joys begun, which ne'er shall end."

In short, while Wesley was a strong believer in the Coming, he had no practical interest in any theory, believed in two millennia, where possible took the Bible literally, spoke generally more in the sense of postmillennialists, at times in a sense that suggests the other view, and was so tremendously concerned with the major things of Christianity that it never occurred to him to emphasize the Second Coming in the way with which modern discussions have made us familiar.

CHAPTER XII

WAS WESLEY A CONSERVATIVE, A PROGRESSIVE, OR BOTH?

The question of Wesley's real doctrinal position is a fascinating one. To let the cold light of truth on it by one who has no ax to grind might be welcome.

(1) Wesley had a hospitable mind. He read everything he had time to read, he received new views in history, science, philosophy, whether they agreed with his own or not, and he often published them. He compiled books in medicine, natural philosophy, history, church history, foraging everywhere, taking anything that struck him as original or important, not being at all averse to new views in these and other realms. Wesley translated from the French and published a little pamphlet of the Genevese Bonnet, advocating the restoration of all intelligences including animals into the fellowship of God's sons. This does not mean that Wesley indorsed everything he reprinted (we know in this case he had sufficiently grim views of the future fate of impenitent sinners), but it does mean that he had an open mind for every good thing new or old, that he was frank in stating his own views, even if they were provokingly original, and that he was constantly on the lookout for interesting things to publish. "I trust I shall not shut my eyes against the light," were his noble words, "from whatever side it comes."[1]

(2) Wesley had a progressive mind. He was not only ever learning, but he held his own views at the mercy of new facts. He was an inductive thinker, and therefore

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[1] *Works*, London, 14-vol. ed., vol. viii, p. 363.

changed the old for the new. Let me give an instance or two. He was brought up to believe that no layman should preach. He became the founder of the greatest system of lay preaching ever known. He was brought up to believe that no one but a bishop could ordain, and that three orders were essential to the ministry. He came to the view that the three orders, though an early polity, were not indispensable, were a custom but not a divine prescription, and that every presbyter was a bishop and therefore on necessity could ordain. He was naturally a stickler for decorum and regularity, but he let loose upon religious services laymen and women, some of them not educated in the schools, and did not put down faintings, fallings, and other demonstrations in meetings, though he discouraged them. He began with believing that the Lord's Supper was the chief means of grace and the highest element in Christian worship, he ended by restoring the apostolic primacy of faith, hope, and love, by establishing a church in most of whose services there was no Lord's Supper at all, and by putting in place of so-called sacraments ("The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking," etc., Rom. 14. 1) righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Though he never gave up the view that baptism is a regenerating ordinance, he practically did away with it as having that function, made prayer, testimony, and preaching the means of salvation, and faith instead of baptism the gate to it. Wesley made no idol of consistency, stolidity, unchangeableness.

As early as 1768 he replied to the Rev. Dr. Rutherforth:

> You charge me likewise and that more than once or twice, with maintaining contradictions. I answer: (1) If all my sentiments were compared together from 1725 to 1768, there would be truth in the charge; for during the latter part of this period I have relinquished several of my former sentiments. (2) During these last thirty years I have varied in some of my sentiments or expressions without observing it. I will not undertake to defend

> all the expressions which I have occasionally used during this time, but must desire men of candor to make allowance for those
>
> *Quas aut incuria fudit*
> *Aut humana parum cavit natura.*[2]
>
> (3) It is not strange if among those inaccurate expressions there are some seeming contradictions . . . (4) nevertheless, I believe there will be found few, if any, real contradictions in what I have published for near thirty years.[3]

(3) This progressiveness of mind is shown in throwing open his theological views to discussion in his first Conferences. In the Minutes of the first Conference, London, June 25, 1744, we read:

> It is desired that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that we meet with a single eye, and as little children, who have everything to learn; that every point which is proposed may be examined to the foundation; that every person may speak freely whatever is in his heart; and that every question which may arise should be thoroughly debated and settled.
>
> *Q.* Need we be fearful of doing this? What are we afraid of? Of overturning our first principles?
>
> *A.* If they are false, the sooner they are overturned the better. If they are true, they will bear the strictest examination. Let us pray for a willingness to receive light, to know of every doctrine whether it be of God.
>
> *Q.* How far does each of us agree to submit to the judgment of the majority?
>
> *A.* In speculative things [that is, in matters of doctrine] each can only submit so far as his judgment shall be convinced. In every practical point each will submit so far as he can without wounding his conscience.
>
> *Q.* Can a Christian submit any further than this to any man or number of men upon earth?
>
> *A.* It is undeniable, he cannot: either to council, bishop, or convocation. And this is that grand principle of private judgment on which all the Reformers proceeded. Every man must judge for himself; because every man must give an account for himself to God!

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[2] Which either lack of care has dropped, or human nature has not sufficiently been wary of.—Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 352.

[3] *Works*, vol. xiv, pp. 347–48.

> After some time spent in prayer, the design of our meeting was proposed, namely, to consider.
>
> 1. What to teach.
> 2. How to teach, and
> 3. What to do; i. e. how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practices.[4]

These revolutionary principles were carried out in these first Conferences. Everybody spoke his mind, nor was he bound to anything more than his conscience dictated. But did not Wesley impose the four volumes of his *Sermons* and his *Notes* as tests of doctrine for his preachers? Yes, but this was not till 1763. Of course before this Wesley dictated everything that was finally passed by the Conference, and all the preachers from the first were morally bound to adhere to these decisions, and did adhere to them. Two or three things compelled to this. (*a*) The work was so strenuous, the conditions under which it was carried on were so galling to all except men of iron diligence and self-sacrificing devotion, that those to whom Wesley's rule became distasteful dropped out of themselves. (*b*) Every preacher took it for granted from the start that Wesley was sole captain of the ship. That was in the historical situation, just as a child takes the rule of his father and mother, involved in his very being and in every circumstance of his life. (*c*) If any ever stumbled at Wesley's rule or criticized it, the latter took occasion to say that their relations were free and voluntary, and that preacher and member could leave at any moment.

(4) Another item in Wesley's position was the lack of doctrinal tests for his societies. There were moral and religious tests, but few doctrinal. This was one of the chief boasts of Wesley. He goes so far as to say in

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[4] *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from the First*, London, 1812, vol. i, pp. 3, 4. These and other parts of these inestimable *Minutes* were omitted in later reprints and in the copy in the *Works*, vol. viii, pp. 275ff. Even in the 1812 copy the names of lay preachers, who were full members of the Conference, were omitted.

one place that there is only one condition required—a "real desire to save the soul,"[5] and in another place that Methodists do not "rest the weight of Christianity on right opinions,"[6] though he takes occasion to modify the first statement elsewhere, and as for the second, everybody knows Wesley's tremendous insistence on the mind of Christ, on holiness of heart and life, as practically the chief thing in religion. But still in his wonderful little piece on *The Character of a Methodist* he makes three reservations as to doctrines. After claiming that whosoever says that a Methodist is a "man of such or such an opinion is grossly ignorant," he adds three qualifications which make fairly comprehensive tests. First, "we believe that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, which distinguishes us from Jews, Turks, and Infidels." This shows that, like the Methodist fathers, he classes all rationalists or belittlers of inspiration as infidels, which in turn is interesting as indicating what his judgment would be as to radical modern biblical criticism. There is not the least doubt that the advanced German critics and their pupils in English-speaking lands would be dubbed by Wesley as "infidels." Second, "we believe the written Word of God to be the only and sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice," in which he distinguishes his people "from those of the Romish Church," without naming them from those of the Greek and Oriental churches, from those Anglicans who made tradition a subordinate rule, as well, of course, from those who make philosophy, the "assured results" of criticism and the "trend of modern thought" as virtual rules of faith. Third, "we believe Christ to be the eternal, supreme God, and herein we are distinguished from the Socinians and Arians." Then he goes on: "But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity we think and let think."[7] From this we gather that, according to Wesley, the inspiration of Scripture making it the Word of God, its supremacy as a rule for belief and practice, and the absolute deity of Jesus, were a part of the "root of Christianity," which even members, not to speak of the preachers, were supposed to hold, or which if they did not hold they were so far not Methodists. But outside of these three doctrines, which certainly throw their branches wide, Wesley flung open his societies to all who "desired to flee from the wrath to come"—quite different from the fathers of 1864, who put up twenty-five doctrinal bars before membership to the Methodist Episcopal Church, which no General Conference until 1924 had the grace or fidelity to the original Christian or original Methodist spirit to take down.

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[5] *Works*, vol. xiii, p. 266.

[6] *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 206.

(5) Wesley anticipated later trends in his emphasis on practical things rather than theoretical strictness. He says that his aim has been to "keep in full view the interests of his church in general and of practical religion, not considering the Church of England or the cause of Methodism but as subordinate thereto. . . . I have no more concern for the reputation of Methodism or of my own than for the reputation of Prester John. I have the same point of view as when I set out [he is writing in 1756], the promoting as I am able, vital practical religion." The "very thing I want," he says, "is to render the Methodists, under God, more instrumental to the ends of practical religion."[8] It was the work of God, not orthodoxy, that was his main concern. As to too strict adherence to external forms, he says his preachers objected to the liturgy of the church (which also contained doctrine, though it was the reading of the service which they had in mind), which "they allowed was in general one of the most excellent human compositions that ever was," and

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[7] *Works*, vol. viii, p. 340.

[8] *Ibid.*, vol. xiii, pp. 196, 198.

yet as to which "they thought it was both absurd and sinful to declare such an assent and consent as is required" by the church to that or "to any merely human composition." Wesley acknowledged that this and other objections of his preachers he "could not answer to his own satisfaction."[9] Evidently, a too slavish deference "to any merely human composition" was not in the Wesley blood.

(6) This last comes out in his dealing with the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of his own church. When he sent a Prayer Book over in 1784 for the use of his societies in America (an abridged edition of that of the English Church) he cut out at one stroke the following Articles: 3, 8, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26, 29, 33, 35, 36, and 37—all omissions in the interest of comprehension, liberality or simplicity. These doctrines were thus thrown aside: descent of Christ into "hell"; the binding obligation of the Nicene (= the so-called Niceno-Constantinopolitan, which is wrongly given in Prayer Book as the Nicene Creed), the Athanasian (falsely so called), and the Apostles' Creed; the sinful nature of all good works done before justification and their lack of every kind of merit (I would not say that Wesley disbelieved this Article 13, but his tremendous insistence on morality, and his belief that heathen could do good works made the Article suspicious); the sinlessness of Jesus, which, of course, Wesley believed; the necessarily offending in many things by Christians, which he did not believe; predestination; the impossibility of being saved in a non-Christian religion ("law or sect which he professeth"), which was against one of the cherished convictions of Wesley, namely, that good heathen could be saved; power of church to decree rites and ceremonies and decide points of faith; general councils convoked by princes and decree according to Scripture; no one can

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[9] *Ibid.*, vol. xiii, pp. 194–95.

preach or administer sacraments except the lawfully called, that is, those called by the publicly recognized authorities (which would really exclude all non-Anglicans); wickedness of ministers does not hinder the good effect of their preaching and sacraments, so that no one should absent himself on account of that wickedness (while Wesley urged his people to attend church, he never insisted on their going to hear an evil liver, or receive sacraments from him); the wicked do not receive the body and blood of Christ in sacrament; a person excommunicated is to be looked upon as heathen and publican until repentance and reception again by recognized authority; the first and second Books of Homilies contain good and wholesome doctrine and must be read in churches by ministers; the consecration of archbishops and bishops and ordaining of the priests according to the books set forth in the reign of Edward VI are perfectly valid; the king has chief power both in civil and ecclesiastical things; the Pope has no jurisdiction in this realm; punishment of death is right; and Christian men may serve in wars. These were the doctrines omitted.

Then in the articles retained by Wesley omissions were made for simplicity or liberality. The declaration about the apocryphal books of the Old Testament with the list of those books was let go. When it is said that original sin is the "fault and corruption of every man," the word "fault" was omitted; there were omitted also the words: "so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born in this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *φϱόνημα σαϱκὸς*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." This doctrine of depravity and original sin as guilt, which was the teaching of all the Protestant churches except Unitarian, was shared by Wesley, as I understand, and his omission of it from Article 9 of his church was not because he disbelieved it but because he wanted to shorten and simplify the creed of his American followers. (No one can read his *Notes* on Rom. 5. 12-19 without seeing that Wesley shared the general view. Even infants sinned in Adam, he says, so death passed on them which would be eternal death were it not for the work of Christ.) He changed the title of Article 16, "Of Sin After Baptism," to "Of Sin After Justification," and he substituted justification for baptism every time the latter word occurred. This shows the working of a more rational conception of sin and of baptism. It was Catholic doctrine that baptism washed away the stain of original sin and cleansed the soul, and some held that on this account serious sins committed after baptism were especially heinous and could hardly be forgiven. Though Wesley did not entirely get away from baptismal regeneration, he did get away from this phase of it, and therefore put justification for baptism in his Articles. The historical judgment in Article 19 that various ancient churches erred even in faith is omitted as not suitable to a brief creed. The statement that the sacraments are "effectual signs of grace" is changed to "certain signs of grace." The word "christened" is changed to "baptized," and this important statement is entirely omitted: "Whereby [by baptism] as by an instrument they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promise of forgiveness of sin and of an adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." I do not think Wesley omitted all this because he disbelieved it; but it was a statement too massive and particular to suit one who put so much stress on repentance and faith, smacking too much of *ex opere operato,* and too elaborate for a creed. Then the drive at the Baptists of Article 27, "the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ," is cut down to its barest form, "the baptism of young children is to be retained in the church." "Bishops, priests, and deacons" in the Article on marriage are changed to "the ministers of Christ." The words "as certain Anabaptists" in the Article on communism are changed to "some."

So much for those elements in Wesley which might be called progressive. Let us now look at the more positive sides of his teaching. In his first Conferences (1744ff.) he took up some practical doctrines. The first was justification. The *Minutes* are preserved. He says justification is being pardoned and received into God's favor, is received only by those who believe, that a sinner is convinced by the Holy Spirit that Christ "loved me and gave himself for me," that having this faith justifies him, that he knows it, that love and obedience are the properties of faith and must therefore follow it, that willful sin destroys his justification and it must be restored by repentance and faith, that it need not be lost, and will not be if we let it bring forth good fruits. He then takes up imputation of Adam's sin, by which he means simply the natural consequences of Adam's sin on his posterity, which are mortality of our bodies, disuniting of our souls from God, the being born with "sinful, devilish nature," so that we are now children of wrath. The imputation of Christ's righteousness he does not believe except in the sense that "by the merits of Christ all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam's actual sin." (That is, as I understand, no child dying would be lost; only willful intelligent sin damns). He says also that through the death of Christ, the "bodies of all men become immortal after the resurrection, their souls receive capacity of spiritual life, including an actual spark or seed of it, all believers become children of grace and reconciled to God, and are made partakers of the divine nature." No man, he says, "can be justified or saved by the works of the law either moral or ritual."[10]

In other words, Wesley takes the ordinary Protestant view that we are justified by faith on account of what Christ has done, and by faith only. But to-day we do not like a theology so humbling, though it is really ennobling, for, in the nature of things, faith is the only means which vitally unites us to the Eternal God. Therefore Professor Williston Walker says[11] that justification by faith as a universal test may be questioned. Men want to serve God and their generation, he says, without any such sense of trust and forgiveness. "They desire with God's aid to do the best they can." The experience of Paul and Luther as to justification, he claims, is not possible for all. That is an admirable hint of the difference between moralism and Christianity: nice people doing the best they can (where do we find them?) and sinners before the spotless holiness of the Eternal Father justified from their sins by faith in his Son.

The next day in this Conference of 1744 Wesley defined sanctification as being renewed in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, so that we love him with all our heart and mind and strength, which implies that all inward sin is taken away. How is this done? By religious education, reading, struggle, self-denial? Not according to Wesley:

"*Q*. Is faith the condition, or the instrument, of sanctification?

"*A*. It is both condition and instrument of it. When we begin to believe, sanctification begins. And as faith increases, holiness increases till we are created anew."[12]

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[10] *Works*, vol. viii, pp. 275–78.

[11] *History of the Christian Church*, 1918, pp. 339–40.

This conception of sanctification as the progressive cleaning out of the soul and life of all sin in response to faith is very characteristic of early Methodism, but how far it is congenial to our present-day atmosphere you are as good a judge as I.

The thoroughly evangelical bent of Wesley's mind is seen in his refusal to belittle justification as over against the supposed greater good of sanctification.

> *Q.* 19. Do we ordinarily represent a justified state as great and happy as it is?
>
> *A.* Perhaps not. A believer walking in the light is inexpressibly great and happy.
>
> *Q.* 20. Should we not have a care of depreciating justification in order to exalt the state of full sanctification?
>
> *A.* Undoubtedly we should beware of this; for one may insensibly slide into it.
>
> *Q.* 21. How shall we effectually avoid it?
>
> *A.* When we are going to speak of entire sanctification, let us first describe the blessings of a justified state as strongly as possible.[13]

The thoroughly New Testament or evangelical character of Wesley's point of view is seen in his remarkable effort to get as near as possible to two theologies both of which in their peculiar views he detested. But because he disliked these special views was no reason, he says, for getting as far as possible from those theologies themselves, because both "lay very near to the truth of the gospel." These systems were Calvinism and Antinomianism. He says we ought to get "to the very edge of Calvinism (1) in ascribing all good to the free grace of God, (2) in denying all natural free will and all power antecedent to grace, and (3) in excluding all merit even for what one has and does by the grace of God." He says we ought to come "to the edge of Antinomianism (1) in exalting the merits and love of Christ, and (2) in rejoicing evermore." And in all cases faith so far from superseding holiness or good works, implies both, as a cause does its effects.[14] In these things he expresses the very heart of Protestant evangelical Christianity. It's a different world from the rationalist, Unitarian, etc. He adds that the particular means which God hath ordained for receiving his sanctifying grace are prayer, searching the Scripture, "communicating" (receiving the Lord's Supper), and fasting—very old-fashioned means of grace, for which many to-day would substitute religious education and psychology.

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[12] *Works*, vol. viii, p. 279.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 284.

Another instance of a point of view different from ours is Wesley's insistence on entire sanctification, not as greater or more necessary than justification, but as great and necessary in its own place. He says the general (Protestant) view is that full sanctification is given just before or at death, and he does not deny that this may be true in many cases. But he insists that this delay is not necessary, that, on the contrary, Scripture abundantly provides for the blessing in this life, and that all believers may realize it if they wish. Our indisposition to it is from "our slowness and unreadiness of heart to believe the works of God." Even those who are sincere Christians and do not have this experience should rejoice with joy unspeakable. And yet even these should be troubled on account of the "sinful nature which still remains in us." How old-fashioned this sounds!—"It is good for us to have a deep sense of this [evil nature], and to be much ashamed before the Lord. But this should only incite us the more earnestly to turn to Christ every moment, and to draw light and life and strength from him, that we may go on conquering and to conquer. And, therefore, when the sense of our sin most abounds, the sense of his love should much more abound." In any case believers should always remember that though "there are still greater gifts" yet to come, like complete holiness, yet the gift of justification and regeneration "is inexpressibly great and glorious."[15]

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[14] *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 285.

Over against this some to-day would say: "Don't bother about your own condition, whether you are sanctified or not. Do good to others and you won't have time to think of yourself." Of course Wesley believed in active work for others, but it was the overflowing love of one happy in the Saviour's love. Or if I might quote the sixth paragraph in his *Character of a Methodist:*

> He is therefore happy in God, yea always happy as having in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, and overflowing his soul with peace and joy. Perfect love having now cast out fear, he rejoices evermore. He rejoices in the Lord always, even in God his Saviour, and in the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he hath now received the atonement. Having found redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, he cannot but rejoice whenever he looks back to the horrible pit out of which he is delivered; when he sees all his transgressions blotted out as a cloud, and his iniquities as a thick cloud. He cannot but rejoice whenever he looks on the state wherein he now is; being justified freely, and having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. For "he that believeth hath the witness in himself," being now the son of God by faith. "Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying Abba, Father! And the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God." He rejoiceth also, whenever he looks forward in hope of the glory that shall be revealed; yea, this his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten me again to a living hope—of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me!"[16]

This transports us back to the times of our boyhood days, when Methodism as a joyous experience of divine love and power was a living force, so different from the atmosphere in which we now live that it almost seems a vanished era in the world's history.

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[15] *Works*, vol. viii, p. 298 (see pp. 293–98).

[16] *Ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 342.

But you say that in this very tract, after giving these and other characteristics, Wesley admits that "these are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity," and that he and his followers refuse to be distinguished from other men by any but the common principles of Christianity—"the plain old Christianity that I teach renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction" (p. 346). If, however, we assume that that Christianity does not include the ordinary evangelical doctrines historically at bottom of Protestant churches, we deceive ourselves, because the wording and spirit of this famous tract presuppose just those ideas. He doesn't mention doctrines as such, but he mentions Scripture which is at the heart of the doctrines: adorning the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; being justified by faith, we have peace with God; if there be any consolation in Christ; let us strive together for the faith of the gospel; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, etc. He cannot destribe a Methodist without describing, consciously or unconsciously, the substance of evangelical Christianity both as experience and as doctrine. To make that Christianity regnant was his Movement.

A pretty good test of old-fashioned Methodism is its high regard for the Bible. Of course I don't refer to unimportant questions of criticism, such as canon, text, authorship, etc., but the Bible as God's word, as the rule of faith and life. He who takes the Bible thus is an evangelical, he who whittles away its authority by subjective criticism, or by objective criticism not well based, is a rationalist. In his *Short History of Methodism* (1764) Wesley describes the first Methodists as observing neither the discipline of the church nor the statutes of the University "any further than was bound upon them by one book, the Bible; it being their one desire and design to be downright Bible Christians, taking the Bible, as interpreted by the primitive church and our own, for their whole and sole rule" (p. 348). This simple-hearted belief in the Bible comes out in his comment on a book which taught Universalism as to hell. "It would be excusable if these menders of the Bible would offer their hypotheses modestly. But we cannot excuse them when they not only obtrude their novel scheme with the utmost confidence, but even ridicule that scriptural one [eternity of hell] which always was and is now held by men of the greatest learning and piety in the world. Hereby they promote the cause of infidelity more effectively than either Hume or Voltaire"[17] (Aug., 1773, and this even though the author he is criticizing allowed that hell might last 30,000 years!) A man who deviated from the plain statements of Scripture was branded as a "mender of the Bible," of worse influence than an infidel. This attitude of Wesley is seen also in his attachment to the older versions of the English Bible over against the 1611 version, which was the Revised Version of his day. In a sermon he has to use as text Psa. 74.12, which in the Prayer Book version (Coverdale's, 1535, reprinted with slightest changes in Great Bible, 1539-40)[18] reads: "For God is my King of old: the help that is done upon earth, he doeth it himself." But in the so-called Authorized Version (1611) it reads: "For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth," which as it is repeated in the Revised Version (1885, American Standard ed., 1901) must be much nearer the Hebrew. And yet so attached was Wesley to the old wording that he makes fun of the change in his *Journal,* September 14, 1785: "What a wonderful emendation! Many such emendations there are in this translation; one would think King James had made them himself."

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[17] *Works,* vol. iii, p. 504.

[18] Westcott, *History of English Bible,* new ed., by W. A. Wright, 1906, p. 280, note.

Wesley's old-fashioned view of the Bible is seen in his Sermon 16, "The Means of Grace."

> All who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in searching the Scriptures. Search the Scriptures, saith he, for they testify of me (John 5. 39). The objection that this is not a command, but only an assertion that they did search the Scriptures, is shamelessly false. I desire those who urge it to let us know how a command can be more clearly expressed than in those terms, ἐρευνᾶτε τας γραφάς. It is as peremptory as so many words can make it. [I might say that ἐρευννᾶτε may be either indicative or imperative. That it is indicative here, in spite of Wesley, is clearly shown by Godet, *Com ad loc.;* see also Meyer]. . . . 'The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily. Therefore many of them believed,' found the grace of God in the way which he had ordained. . . . Under searching the Scriptures hearing, reading, and meditating are contained. . . . That this is the great means God has ordained for conveying his manifold grace to man is delivered in the fullest manner that can be conceived in the words which immediately follow, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God,' consequently all Scripture is infallibly true. [Wesley then refers to the fact that it was the Old Testament to which Paul referred, and continues.] Behold this, lest ye one day wonder and perish, ye who make so small account of one half of the oracles of God! Yea, and that half which the Holy Ghost expressly declares that it is 'profitable' as a means ordained of God for this very thing, 'for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,' etc.[19] [So also in reply to Roman Catholics as to the all sufficiency of Scripture, after quoting 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17:] The Scripture, therefore, is a rule sufficient in itself, and was by men divinely inspired at once delivered to the world, and so neither needs nor is capable of any further addition. . . . For as all divine faith is founded upon divine authority [a hard saying to the rationalist], so there is now no divine authority but the Scriptures; and therefore no one can make that to be divine authority which is not contained in them.[20]

Here we have a high doctrine of inspiration of Scripture and the highest of the Bible's value as a means of grace. No words were more characteristic of Wesley, as well as of the early universal Methodist consciousness of the religious worth of Scripture. On petty details of criticism Wesley was free. On the historic Protestant attitude as to Scripture he was evangelical through and through.[21]

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[19] *Works*, vol. v, pp. 193–94.

[20] Vol. x, pp. 90–91. How the full inspiration of Scripture makes it a perfect guide as to right and wrong see Sermon 12, *Works*, vol. v, p. 136.

Finally, the Trinity is a good test of orthodoxy. Wesley believed in the regular doctrine, but had no explanation of the mystery. "These Three are one," that is the fact, he said. "I believe the fact"; as to *how,* the manner, "I have nothing to do." The "device of styling them three offices rather than Persons gives up the whole doctrine." He refers to his brother's Trinity Hymns as expressing his sentiments.[22] He thinks Jones' book on the subject the best he ever saw (the Rev. William Jones, F.R.S., 1757). What it lacks in application is "abundantly supplied by my brother's Hymns."[23] I have in my library Charles Wesley's *Gloria Patri, or Hymns to the Trinity,* 4th edition, London, 1757 (there is another collection, *Hymns on the Trinity*). To me the verses are more orthodox than poetic. Here is No. 3:

"Father live, by all things feared;
Live the Son, alike revered;
Equally be thou adored,
Holy Ghost, eternal Lord.
Three in Person, one in power,
Thee we worship evermore.
Praise by all to thee be given,
Endless theme of earth and heaven!"

Jones' book on the Trinity sets forth the ordinary doctrine. How could Wesley believe otherwise, with his profound reverence for the text of the New Testament, even defending 1 John 5. 7,[24] which everybody knows to be spurious and most scholars knew then. As to piety, however, reading the Life of Thomas Firmin convinced him that correct notions as to the Trinity were not necessary, as he found Firmin a pious man.[25] But the church doctrine of the Trinity was one of the rocks of his faith.[26]

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[21] I have written this entirely independently of anything given on same subject in *Wesley as Sociologist, Theologian, Churchman,* 1918, pp. 47–51, to which the reader is referred.

[22] *Works,* vol. xii, p. 293.

[23] *Ibid.,* vol. xiii, p. 30.

Finally, it is said that it makes no difference what Wesley believed anyway, that we are not bound by him, but do our own thinking. Of course there is a sense in which this is true. But when it is sought to justify departure from the leading principles of the Methodist Reformation, without which principles we should never have heard of him or his movement, with its vast and beneficent results—justify such departure by an appeal to isolated and distorted sentences or clauses of his writings—then it makes a tremendous difference what he believes. It is, then, of essential importance to know accurately what was Wesley's gospel, what the master light of Wesley's seeing, what the truth for which he lived and died, which pulsated in the heart of that dynamic which historically made the modern Christian world. Man a sinner, sin damnable here and hereafter, Christ the only Saviour, salvation through justification by faith in Christ alone, that salvation to be attained here and now, the Bible the only rule of faith and practice, and infallible in its own sphere as such a rule, the eternal issues of life and death in the light of these truths—these are the things which gave us our heritage. Weaken these, deny these, and you will have a nice ethical religion, a new Unitarianism—but you will not have Methodism, nor modern evangelicalism, nor that Christianity which is the power of God unto salvation unto every one who believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

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[24] *Ibid.*, vol. vi, p. 201.

[25] *Ibid.*, vol. xiv, p. 293.

[26] See further on Trinity in Faulkner, *Wesley as Sociologist, Theologian, Churchman*, pp. 58, 60, 61.

NOTE 1

THINK AND LET THINK

On account of an expression of Wesley, "Think and let Think," it has been thought that he was more or less indifferent to doctrinal truth. The words occur four times.

(1) In his famous tract, *The Character of a Methodist* (1742), he says that the "distinguishing marks" of a Methodist are not his "opinions of any sort," except in the three doctrines already given above (pp. 187-188). Then he adds, "But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity we think and let think."[27] Here there is a striking limitation to the theological license of his members. The three truths which he believed organically related to the Christian religion, the inspiration of Scriptures, the Bible as the only rule of faith and life, and Christ the "eternal and supreme God," not simply his preachers, but also his members, were held to.

(2) In 1765 Wesley wrote a letter to the famous Henry Venn, the pious and thoroughly evangelical church clergyman at Huddersfield. The former had been trying to form an association of Anglican ministers like-minded with himself. If it had succeeded, it would have been the forerunner on the Low Church side of that little band of High men who met at Hadleigh rectory in Sussex, July 25-29, 1833, and started as a consolidated force the movement which has revolutionized the Episcopal Church and sent thousands of her best children to follow the beckoning hands of Rome. Would it have had an equal though better influence? Alas! Wesley met poor success. Various difficulties in Wesley and his teachings were pointed out. To some of these he replies in this letter. "If anyone will convince me of my errors, I will heartily thank him. I believe all the Bible as far as I understand it, and am ready to be convinced. If I am a heretic, I became such by reading the Bible. All my notions I drew from thence; and with little help from men, unless in the single point of justification by faith. But I impose my notions upon none: I will be bold to say there is no man living further from it. [Into this little society of clergy Wesley invited all those in general agreement with him. But he did not insist that they should indorse all his views, only his aims and movement as a whole.] I make no opinion the term of union with any man: I think and

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[27] *Works*, vol. viii, p. 340.

let think. What I want is holiness of heart and life. They who have this are my brother and sister and mother!"[28]

This does not mean at all that Wesley was indifferent to Christian doctrine. If he had been, Venn, the Coryphæus of orthodoxy, the strenuous champion of evangelical faith, would have instantly repudiated him. But it means that for the formation of this little band of sympathetic fellow workers for English religion, Wesley did not intrude opinions on which these like-minded men might not agree.

For union with sympathetic leaders he would hold his own opinions on nonessentials in abeyance, but for his own preachers at this very moment he insisted on Methodist doctrine. In an *Address to the Traveling Preachers* (1769), he speaks of this effort to get agreement among "all those ministers of our church who believe and preach salvation by faith," and of his utter failure. Then he proposes among his traveling preachers a closer union in case of his death, that is, a definite union to keep up "the Connection" (the Methodist movement, which was even then to all intents and purposes a denomination, a church). This union was to be based on three resolutions:

I. *To devote ourselves entirely to God;* denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at this one thing—to save our own souls and them that hear us.

II. *To preach the old Methodist doctrines,* and no other, contained in the Minutes of the Conferences.

III. To observe and enforce the whole *Methodist discipline* laid down in said Minutes.[29]

This was to be signed by the preachers.

(3) In Wesley's little tract, *Thoughts Upon a Late Phenomenon* (1788), where he is defending the Methodists from the charge of bigotry (see last sentence of tract), and making his favorite point of catholicity of terms of admission, he says that Churchmen or Dissenters, Presbyterians and Independents (Congregationalists), Anabaptists or Quakers (he omits Unitarians), may continue to hold their opinions on faith and order, "and none will contend with them about it. They think and let think. One condition and one only is required—a real desire to save the soul. Where this is, it is enough."[30] Here he does not mention reservations as to Bible, rule of faith, and deity of our Lord, but this is probably

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[28] *Works*, vol. xiii, pp. 239–40.

[29] Tyerman, *Life and Times of John Wesley*, vol. 2, pp. 49–50 (italics Wesley's).

[30] *Works*, vol. xiii, p. 266.

for brevity, as they were never withdrawn and are clearly understood. They were so well known that further mention was unnecessary.

(4) One of his most striking letters is to a bishop of the Church of England against persecuting the Methodists:

"My Lord—I am a dying man having already one foot in the grave. Humanly speaking I cannot creep long upon the earth, being now nearer 90 than 80 years of age. But I cannot die in peace before I have discharged this office of Christian love to your Lordship. . . . I ask in the name and in the presence of Him to whom both you and I are shortly to give an account, why do you trouble those who are quiet in the land? Those who fear God and work righteousness? Does your Lordship know what the Methodists are? That many thousands of them are zealous members of the Church of England, and strongly attached not only to His Majesty, but his present ministry [This was soon after the beginning of the French Revolution. Besides there were important doings in England's politics, especially in trying to extend political privileges to non-Episcopalians, in which many Methodists might be on the Episcopal side.] Why should your Lordship, setting religion out of the question, throw away such a body of respectable friends? Is it for their religious sentiments? Alas, my Lord, is this a time to persecute any man for conscience sake? I beseech you, my Lord, do as you would be done to. You are a man of sense; you are a man of learning; nay, I verily believe (what is of infinitely more value) you are a man of piety. Then think, and let think. I pray God to bless you with the choicest of his blessings. I am, my Lord, your Lordship's dutiful son and servant."[31]

Here is another plea for toleration. Think and let think as far as not to persecute such innocent and even useful people to the state as the Methodists.

These, then, are Wesley's principles in a nutshell on think and let think:

(1) For members in the societies no dogmatic or ecclesiastical tests except the fundamental principles of evangelical Christianity, inspiration of Scripture, Bible as rule of faith and life, and deity of Christ.

(2) For a union of evangelical clergy no intrusion of Wesley's private or special views.

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[31] Eayrs, *Letters of John Wesley*, 1915, pp. 133-36.

(3) For his own preachers, entire obedience to Methodist doctrine and discipline.

One or two other facts are of interest here. Wesley made one exception to his rule not to preach at the same hour as service in the parish church: namely, in case of a minister in the latter who is "an Arian or of an equally pernicious doctrine."[32] One of his questions at Conference was: "Some who once preached with us deny original sin. What is to be done in this case? Answer. No preacher who denies original sin can preach among us. And we advise our brethren not to hear him."[33] The following entry shows how indisposed he was to leave his preachers to every wind of doctrine. "Q. 22. Are any directions to be given concerning books? No books are to be published without Mr. Wesley's sanction. And those which are approved by him shall be printed at his press in London and sold by his book-keeper."

No. 2

WAS WESLEY AN EVOLUTIONIST?

Doctor Collier of the American University, Washington, D. C., in his interesting pamphlet, *Back to Wesley* (1924), calls attention to what he thinks Wesley's anticipation of evolution. This is so appealing that I might add a word or two.

Evolution is used in two senses: (1) Gradual progress, change, and advance in nature. In this sense Wesley was an evolutionist. (2) In the sense "that all organisms have arisen from remote common ancestors by a process of gradual change or evolution, and that living matter or "life" itself in all probability arose from nonliving matter in the first stage of this evolutionary process."[34]

This is what is commonly understood by evolution, and I think certain elements in the life of this planet presupposed in the definition yet await proof, in the opinion of some scientists. Even Doctor Collier acknowledges that Wesley did not hold this. That is, he was not an evolutionist in the present scientific sense of the term. He had no idea of "organic evolution," as held by many biologists now. "Wesley believed that all species were created at the beginning, and that no modification could take place."[35] And when Wesley speaks of there being "no sudden change in nature; all is gradual and elegantly varied," he is not speaking at all of the change of one species into another, but simply of the quiet and slow progress which everyone sees in nature. That, accordingly, was his "evolution." When it is said that Wesley held the "postulates of evolution, unity of creation, uniformity of nature, uniformity of law," that is saying only what everyone holds who holds to law at all.

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[32] *Minutes of Conference*, 1786, collected ed., 1812, vol. i, p. 191.

[33] *Ibid.*, 1784, same ed., vol. i, p. 173.

[34] *Ency. Britannica*, 14th ed., 1929, vol. 8, p. 917.

But we must remember one fact about these supposed quotations from Wesley's *Natural Philosophy.* Except his preface we are not sure that in the whole two volumes we are reading a line of Wesley's. It is a translation of (*a*) a Latin work of Budæus, (*b*) Bonnet's *Contemplation of Nature,* with large extracts from (*c*) Denton's *Origin of Discoveries Attributed to the Ancients,* and (*d*) Goldsmith's *History of the Earth and Animated Nature.* Wesley took the books, appropriating what he wanted and leaving out what he did not want. Except we compare carefully with the originals we do not know the author of a sentence of the whole work. All we know is that whatever is given appeared to Wesley reasonable and not contrary to Scripture, and especially that the whole "displayed the amazing power, wisdom, and goodness of the great Creator," served "to warm our hearts and to fill our mouths with wonder, love, and praise" (Wesley's preface). But that every or any sentence is his personal conviction we do not know.

But we are worse off. In 1816 Mayo published an American edition of this compilation by Wesley, though not before he revised and enlarged it. So that we are not only not sure of reading Wesley when we take up the best available edition of his *Natural Philosophy,* we are not sure of reading Buddæus, Bonnet, and others. It may be Mayo, and not the original authors. The *Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation* or *Natural Philosophy* as a first hand source of Wesley's personal views is worthless; but we are sure that in his own mind the book served to praise and glorify God through the wonders of nature and the universe according to the best books then available.

On the false charge, however, made by a well-known scholar that Wesley was a Ptolemaist, see Faulkner in *Methodist Review* (N. Y.), 1912, 954-56.

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[35] *Back to Wesley,* p. 36.

CHAPTER XIII

DID WESLEY INTEND TO FOUND THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH?

The present study is of historic interest only. We know what was done in 1784, and whether Wesley intended it in whole or in part, history has justified it. But since that is true, there is all the more reason why we can sit before the problem with a quiet mind to find out the facts alone; or, if we cannot find out all the facts, to get as near to them as possible.

What is the general view of what was done in 1784? It is this. Since the Revolutionary War had left the Church of England in America disorganized and largely without pastors, Wesley believed that it was time a new church was organized in America to take the place of this more or less destroyed church, and give the people the sacraments. He therefore ordained Coke a bishop to come here to ordain Asbury a deacon, presbyter and bishop, to set up a regular Methodist Church and give the people the full benefits of such church. This, accordingly, was carried out. Wesley was greatly pleased with what was done, and everybody was happy. This is the general view of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Let us now go back, see some of the historical steps, and study the documents. We all know that after Rankin's departure for England in 1778, Asbury acted under Wesley as the sole General Assistant in America. By General Assistant was meant a man who stood in the same relation to the work in his territory as Wesley did in England. That is, Asbury was the American Wesley, though, of course, under Wesley. That meant that he had absolute authority to station the preachers, to control the doings of the Conferences, and to supervise the work to his own taste, and unless countermanded by Wesley (which on account of distance was not likely) whatever he did "went." Now, Asbury did not exercise his authority in an offensive way. He tried to keep in with the preachers and not necessarily antagonize them. For all that, there was dissatisfaction with Asbury, and preachers who returned to England reported this to Wesley. He, accordingly, wrote a letter in October, 1783, exhorting his people in America to abide by the Methodist doctrine and discipline and the Large Minutes of the (British) Conference, to be careful how they received preachers from England, and that he "does not wish our American brethren to receive any who make a difficulty of receiving Francis Asbury as the General Assistant."[1] In one of Asbury's Conferences a sentence of Wesley was read which put the matter thus: "On hearing every preacher for and against what is in debate, the right of determination shall rest with him according to the *Minutes*" (that is, the English *Minutes*, referring to Wesley's method). On March 20, 1784, Asbury wrote to Wesley a letter wonderfully adapted to conciliate him and make him pleased with him. "You know, sir, it is not easy to rule, nor am I pleased with it. I bear it as my cross; yet it seems that a necessity is laid upon me. Oh, pray for me, that I may be filled with light and power, with zeal and prudence, and above all with humility."[2] The preachers would bear this rule from Asbury, who had cast in his lot with America for good and all, and who shared their hardships, but they grew restive if Coke showed too much of the same spirit. You have heard the interesting anecdote illustrating this. At a General

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[1] Lee, *History of the Methodists*, Baltimore, 1810, pp. 85–86.

[2] *Arminian Magazine*, vol. ix, p. 681.

Conference in 1796, when Coke was presiding, he introduced a resolution (for Asbury and he acted as legislators in the Conference, proposing and advocating measures, and as superintendents their influence in this sphere was almost if not quite mandatory) which was looked upon as dictatorial or an undue deprivation of the liberty of the preachers. This so excited Mathews, a young Irish preacher (the preachers were all comparatively young) that he arose and shouted, "Popery! Popery! Popery!" Doctor Coke rebuked him for his rudeness, and Mathews said "Och!" and sat down. Then Coke, provoked at the reception of his resolution, tore up the paper containing it and said, "Do you think yourselves equal to me?" Nelson Reed then instantly arose and, turning to Asbury, said: "Doctor Coke has asked if we think ourselves equal to him. I answer, Yes, we think ourselves equal to him, notwithstanding he was educated at Oxford, and has been honored with the degree of Doctor of Laws, and, more than that, we think ourselves equal to Doctor Coke's king."

"He is hard on us," remarked Coke to Asbury.

"I told you our preachers are not blockheads," said Asbury, and thus the matter ended, though Coke, with the instincts of a gentleman, added an apology.[3]

It must be remembered that both Coke and Asbury had been brought up in the Episcopal Church in England and so were open to views of high Episcopal prerogative. Asbury read Ostervald's *Christian Theology,* which showed the equality of ministers in the primitive church, but was not convinced by it; and then he read Cave's *Lives of the Fathers,* which showed an inequality and that pleased him, for he wrote: "There is not, nor in my mind can there be, a perfect equality between a constant president and those over whom he always presides"—

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[3] This story is told by Alfred Griffith in his sketch of Reed in Sprague, *Annals,* vol. vii, p, 69, who apparently had it from Reed.

by which he meant not simply the superiority of a chairman in a meeting as chairman, but an official superiority in all relations.

As to Wesley's right to ordain men to administer sacraments, this had been brought about in his mind by the co-operation of two independent forces, namely, the exigencies of his work as providential leader, and his reading or study. Starting with High Church views of the ministry, he had been brought by reading Stillingfleet's *Eirenicon* and King's *Primitive Church*—for Wesley was always a student of church history—to the belief that the orders of bishop and presbyter were really one and the same, and that therefore he was a scriptural bishop. Over against this was the promise he had made as a minister of the Church of England to abide by its rules, either formally in as many words or informally by accepting his place as a minister in its fold—these informal pledges being equally binding to a sensitive and conscientious spirit. The effect of this is shown in his care never to hold services in church hours, to which he adhered all his life except toward the end in Ireland, and not to allow his lay preachers to administer sacraments, and not to ordain them himself. Any one of these three things would strike in the face his loyalty to his church.

I said a moment ago that he became convinced that an elder was a bishop. His study of church history had also brought him to the view that elders could ordain bishops, not only for the reason that they were of the same order, but also because the ancient church in Alexandria had done that very thing for a century or more. The way was open to him, therefore, to go forward to ordination whenever circumstances demanded. The close of the Revolutionary War offered those circumstances. The Episcopal clergy had largely left America for England, their church was disorganized, only four or five of their ministers were friendly to the Methodists, so that that source of the sacraments for our people was closed. And that was practically the only source, because they could not receive the sacraments at the non-Episcopal churches without joining the latter, and both Wesley and Asbury were strongly opposed to their doing this. Now or never was Wesley's chance. He resolved to act, and he had a man by his side who not only seconded all he did and supported him to the utmost in any advance of this kind, in any assumption of authority or high episcopal prerogative, but even prompted him if he wavered or held back. That man was Coke. If there ever was a man who had an innocent desire for office, ordinations, honors, and all that, it was the Rev. Thomas Coke, D.C.L., of Oxford, curate in South Petherton, and from about 1777 Wesley's earnest disciple and helper, when he was not his leader. Understand, Coke's restless ambitions are not a reflection upon him at all, for he was one of the most consecrated, pious, unselfish, devoted Christian workers (one might truly call him a hero) in the eighteenth century. The rebuffs and setbacks handed out to him in England, and especially in America, never soured his nature nor dampened the quenchless ardor of his Christian faith and love. But history is history. He loved high place and the glamour of office. He even sought to deliver the Methodists into the hands of our Anglican sisters in a letter to Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, looking to his own ordination as bishop. When there was talk of a school for us, he wanted a college and wanted it named for himself. Which was the mover and which the seconder (Asbury or Coke) of the proposition to change Wesley's designation of their office from superintendent to bishop we shall never know, but we may be sure that the little Doctor's vanity did not go with laggard feet to make the change. He and Wesley had talked over this matter of the American societies privately, they had discussed the ancient Alexandrian method of elders ordaining bishops, they both agreed that that method was valid, and that the time had come to put it in action in order to give the Methodists in America the sacraments. But Wesley knew that if he should exercise that right, it would cause an explosion among his Anglican brethren in England. I mean his preachers who were also clergymen of the church and other clergymen who were earnest supporters of his movement. He knew especially that his brother Charles would be furious. He therefore hesitated. "Conscious of entering on so new a plan," says Moore, "he afterward suspended the execution of his purpose, and weighed the whole for upward a year."[4] The plan to which he was inclined, as we shall see in a moment, was the sending over Coke to America, who as full presbyter could, after the fashion of the Alexandrian presbyters, set apart Asbury as overseer and other preachers as elders to administer the sacraments, for which the societies were clamoring and to which Wesley had been urged by Asbury to make some provision in a letter written early in 1784. While thus pondering the matter, Wesley received the following wise and diplomatic letter from Coke:

August 9, 1784.

Honored and Dear Sir: The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it appears to me *that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you* by the imposition of your hands; and that you should lay hands on brother Whatcoat and brother Vasey, for the following reasons: 1. It seems to me the most scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive churches. 2 I may want all the influence in America which you can throw into my scale. Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds that he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed "that he would not receive any person deputed by you to take any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him," or words which evidently implied so much. I do not find any the least degree of prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury; on the contrary, a very great love and esteem, and I am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me, but, rather, to lie at his feet in all things. But as the journey is long and you cannot spare me often, and it is well to provide against *all events*, and an authority *formally* received from you will (I am conscious of it) be fully admitted by the people; and my exercising the office of ordination without that *formal* authority may be disputed, if there be any opposition on any other account; I could, therefore, earnestly wish you would exercise that power, in this instance, which, I have not the shadow of doubt, but God hath invested you with for the good of our connection. I think you have tried me too often to doubt whether I will in any degree use the power you are pleased to invest me with further than I believe obsolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work. 3. In respect of my brethren (brother Whatcoat and Vasey), it is very uncertain indeed whether any of the clergy mentioned by Brother Rankin will stir a step with me in the work except Mr. Jarritt; and it is by no means certain that even he will choose to join me in ordaining [Coke was right here. Jarritt was much offended at the ordinations, and ceased all relations with the Methodists.] And propriety and universal practice make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me that everything should be prepared and everything proper be done that can possibly be done *this side the water*. You can do all this in Mr. C——n's house in your chamber [James Creighton, an ordained elder of the Church of England (or of Ireland) was at this time pastor of City Road (Methodist) Chapel, London, and lived in Wesley's house there, where Wesley had a room. Coke suggests the ordinations be done privately in what we would call the Methodist parsonage]; and afterward (according to Mr. Fletcher's advice) give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you are pleased to invest us. [Like Charles Wesley, Fletcher was not in favor of the ordinations, though he was one of the few called in to consult with Wesley in regard to them, and was in favor of Wesley's getting a bishop to ordain them, and then Wesley giving the ordained letters testimonial to whatever offices he desired. As is well known, Lowth, bishop of London, the eminent Hebrew scholar, whom Wesley asked to ordain some of his preachers, refused.] For the purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Mr. Creighton down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you [Creighton and Coke]. In respect to brother Rankin's argument that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. [When Rankin was in America as Wesley's representative = General Assistant, he and Asbury did not get along well together, and now that he had returned he did not favor ordaining Asbury superintendent, which he knew besides would bring obloquy on Wesley.] Either it will be known or not known; if not known, no odium will arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with perhaps your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

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[4] *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii, pp. 272–73, Am. Ed. vol. ii, p. 193. Moore was a close friend of Wesley and one of his preachers, and his biography is perhaps the best of the early Lives of his hero.

Your most dutiful,

T. Coke.[5]

This was the course of events. Wesley was fully convinced he had right to ordain whether presbyters or superintendents. In February, 1784, he had proposed this to Coke. On account of the opposition of Charles and others he had wavered, especially as it would cut up by the roots all his professions of loyalty to the Church of England (professions sincere, though thoroughly inconsistent). At the Annual Conference in Leeds in July, 1784, Wesley proposed the matter not to the Conference but to two committees or select numbers, to a committee of his preachers and to Anglican ministers who were working with him.[6] Both of these groups advised against the proposal. All that was done in this Conference was simply the appointment of Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey to America. There were no ordinations. Coke was to ordain after he reached America, and, of course, as a regular presbyter he had the same right to do it as Wesley. Here Coke's letter comes in. It was the last straw to break the reluctance of Wesley to face the hail of indignation which must necessarily meet him for such a notorious violation of church rules. Notice this letter. (1) "The power of ordaining others should be received from you." It is as though Coke said: "I might ordain, of course, as I am a presbyter as you. But the risks are too great, for my authority might not be recognized either in England or in America, while yours would be." (2) "And that *you* (not I) should lay hands on Whatcoat," etc. (3) Asbury is jealous of any other sharing the superintendency, and might not receive me unless *you* formally set me apart as superintendent. (4) On account of this, I am not going to take the initiative in America, but defer to his authority. (5) But with your *formal* investiture of me with the power of ordaining there will be no opposition in America. (6) There is no likelihood of any Episcopal minister in America assisting, and as it is customary to have two presbyters to assist in ordaining, you must therefore ordain Whatcoat and Vasey before we start. (7) Of course, if you do this publicly, it will arouse intense opposition, therefore it will have to be done privately, and you can do it readily in your room in London, where you will have Presbyter Creighton to assist you. (8) In regard to Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Creighton down with me to Bristol to assist you and me in ordaining them. (9) If the thing becomes public, you will have to stand by me."

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[5] Moore, *lib. cit.* American ed., vol. ii, pp. 196–97. Italics are as printed in Moore.

[6] For preachers see Tyerman, *Life and Times of Wesley*, vol. iii, p. 438; for select ministers see letter of Creighton to Bradburn, London, 1793, printed by Drinkhouse, *Hist.* vol. i, p. 70, note.

Apparently, this letter determined Wesley to go ahead as he had intended more or less definitely at the first. So from Bristol he sent for Coke and Creighton; they came down from London to Bristol, August 31, 1784, Coke to be ordained superintendent and Creighton to help ordain; on September 1 Wesley ordained Whatcoat and Vasey deacons, assisted by Creighton and Coke; on September 2 he ordained them elders and Coke superintendent, assisted by Creighton; and on September 18 the three thus ordained departed for America.

What did Wesley intend by these ordinations and his mission of Coke? Let us examine the original documents for light.

(1) The *Journal* and *Diary*. In his *Journal* Wesley makes the most fleeting and noncommittal reference. "*Sep.* 1 *Wed.* Being now clear in my own mind, I took a step which I had long weighed in my mind, and appointed Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey to go and serve the desolate sheep in America." Not a word about ordaining, or even "setting apart" as presbyters. Or did he mean the word "appointed" as equivalent to "ordained," as in the early church, where what we mean by ordination was simply appointment. It is not at all likely Wesley meant that. These ordinations were for America only, therefore they were performed in a private room, with only two or three witnesses, and Wesley felt there was no call to give himself away in his *Journal,* which was always published four or five years after the events recorded in it (that is, the *Journal* was published in pamphlet form in twenty-one successive parts during Wesley's life, each part in three to five years after the events described, the last part just after his death). For that reason he refers to it in a way which although true puts the critic on a false scent. Now, September 2, which is the date of the ordination of Coke, he leaves blank altogether, in the first edition of the twentieth part of the *Journal,* in which this date occurs. But in the second edition he feels bold enough to insert from memory under September 2 this entry, as noncommittal as it could be made, and also inaccurate from a slip in memory as to the number: "*Thur.* 2 I added to them three more, which I verily believe will be much to the glory of God." Wesley evidently felt himself skating on thin ice, and he did not want—if I might change the figure—to raise a nest of hornets around his head. Wesley did not add three more, but only one more, namely,

Coke, and him not as presbyter for the regular work in America but as superintendent for a special and temporary work. Wesley's later entry under September 2, therefore, was misleading, though he did not intend it to be. What confused him was the fact that on September 2 he ordained Vasey and Whatcoat as elders and Coke as superintendent, which made the three.

Now, let us take the *Diary.* This is the shorthand manuscript of Wesley's daily doings almost hour for hour, deciphered by the Rev. Nehemiah Curnock, and first published by him (as to this part) in the seventh volume of the Standard edition of the *Journal* issued by the Wesleyan Methodist Book Room in London and by our Book Concern in New York, 1916. Under September 1 we read: "4 Prayer, ordained Rd Whatcoat and T. Vasey; letters; 8 tea," etc. Which means that he arose as usual at four, dressed, prayed, and immediately at an early hour before breakfast, in a private room of a house in Bristol, ordained these two preachers as deacons and perhaps also as elders; after that he wrote letters and at eight sat down to a light breakfast or tea. Under Thursday, September 2, we read: "4 Prayed, ordained Dr. Coke." This is all the light we get from *Journal* or *Diary;* precious little, you will say. One of the most momentous events in church history goes with hardly a notice in the *Journal* intended for publication by the chief actor.[7] Much less is there any hint of an intention to found a new church in America.

(2) The documents sent over with Coke. Three documents by Wesley were carried over the water in that momentous voyage by Coke.

(*a*) A Sketch of what Wesley intended to be done in America, his plans for Coke, Asbury and the American societies. This document would solve our difficuties. But it has perished. It was never published, nor was a copy ever found among the papers of any of the parties concerned. The natural inference is that this sketch went counter to the actual proceedings taken by Asbury and Coke, and that therefore they destroyed it. Anyhow, it has disappeared. Some have suggested that the Letter Testimonial to the Methodists in America soon to be considered under (*c*) is itself the "little sketch." But this is impossible. For (1) the verb is in the past tense. "I *have drawn* up a little sketch," occurring in the very first paragraph, referring to something already done. (2) This testimonial is not a sketch or plan of church government, or of the relation of Methodists in America to Wesley, to the Church of England, or to any organization formed or to be formed in America. We know from other statements that Wesley had a "plan" of how matters were to be arranged here, and if we did not know it from his own words, as we do, we could infer it from a mind so methodical, with such a passion for organization. That plan or sketch he gave to Coke. It has perished.

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[7] Curnock, *Wesley's Journal*, Standard ed., vol. vii, pp. 15, 16.

(*b*) A Letter Testimonial of Coke's ordination. Though this is familiar, I shall have to quote it, as it and its sister document are the only first hand witnesses to Wesley's intentions: "To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College in Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting." Wesley took pride in his Oxford Fellowship and puts it in a conspicuous place, but adds no degree to his name. He also mentions his relation to the Church of England, as though he were to say, What I do now I do as a loyal son of the church, with no intention of supplanting her in America, but, rather, of enlarging and preparing the way for her greater efficiency. "Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America," that is the provinces south of Canada, "who desire to continue under my care." That is, their relation to Wesley is to be substantially the same in the future as in the past; he is still to govern them as presbyter of the Church of England; they are to look to him for guidance both in matters of government and spiritual things. "And still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England." The making of a new denomination is here repudiated, or if new in a sense, it is still to be a part of the Church of England so far as American relations would permit. The founding of a regular Methodist Church having no more relation to the Episcopal Church in England or later to be established in America is entirely out of Wesley's thoughts. Tigert says that the new Methodist Episcopal Church "still adhered to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England." Yes, in a Pickwickian sense. It had no more to do legally or morally with the Church of England as to doctrine and discipline than it had with the man in the moon. Whatever was or was not in the "little sketch," we may be sure it revealed Wesley's idea how the Methodist organization in America was to be dovetailed into the English Episcopal Church in America. "Are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and Lord's Supper according to the usage of the same church"—are not distressed for want of a new denomination, have no desires for that, but simply want the two sacraments, and those not in a new independent ritual, as of a new church, but "according to the usage of the same church." So far, no new independent Methodist Church for Wesley. "And whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers"—not organizing them into a church, but supplying them with ministers for the sacraments. By ministers here Wesley means ordained men only. He never calls his preachers ministers, but helpers or preachers.

"Know all men that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America." He never uses the word "ordained" in any public writing. Why was this? Were not these persons—Whatcoat, Vasey and Coke—ordained by Wesley? They were. Did he not have a right to ordain them? As founder of the Methodists, he believed he had a providential call to provide for the work, which meant a right to ordain, if necessary. Was not their ordination valid according to primitive Christianity? He so believed. Why, then, does he avoid the word "ordination"? For two reasons. (1) The word "ordination" was a technical designation in the usage of the Catholic and Reformed Churches, and his act was a thing apart, a special work for a special emergency. He felt he ought, therefore, to avoid the technical word. (2) Wesley was a minister of the Church of England, and he knew that as such he had no more right to ordain than I have to ordain the students of Drew. But he had a right to do a similar work (really ordination) for his societies in America to tide over their lack of sacraments until his church was later established on this side. If these "settings apart" were temporary ordinations for his own people to supply them with ordinances pending providential developments of the Church of England in America, then they might be reconciled with Wesley's claim that he did not by them separate from the church. If they were ordinations for a new denomination, Wesley in claiming to be still loyal to the church was guilty of the most glaring self-deception ever known in the history of the world.

"And therefore under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart as a superintendent." Notice the avoidance of ecclesiastical terms, that there may be no rivalry with his own church, nor any complications when that church is put up as a regular church in America and takes over his preachers and, of course, ordains them. Coke is not "ordained," and he is not "ordained as bishop"—he is "set apart as superintendent." It is as though Wesley said: "Don't get huffy now, my dear church, as though I were betraying you by putting altar against altar, and violating all my principles as your clergyman. I have ordained no one bishop in your sense. I have set aside Coke as superintendent by prayer and laying of hands so that those poor sheep in the wilderness can get the sacraments. Let God take care of the future."

"By the imposition of my hands and prayer." He does not say whether he used the form in the Prayer Book of his Church or not. Probably not. All he mentions is imposition of hands and prayer, as though it were a more or less informal setting apart without the use of the ordination service. "Being assisted by other ordained ministers." This was a slip of the pen. It should have been, "by another ordained minister," as James Creighton was the only ordained man who assisted him.[8] "Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, a presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work." He gives Coke his degree and his standing in the Church of England, as though it were all the less likely that a presbyter of that church should go forth to form a new denomination in opposition to his own. "And I do hereby recommend him to all it may concern as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ." Notice again absence of all ecclesiastical terms, absence of everything that would precipitate a conflict of ecclesiastical jurisdiction or raise any unseemly questions as to his church loyalty. He is to preside not over a new denomination, but over the scattered sheep in the wilderness, gathered together for the sacraments, "over the flock of Christ."

Now, when we consider the fact that Wesley's sketch of what he wanted in America never saw the light, we are not surprised that this Letter Testimonial as to Coke's ordination ("To whom it may concern," etc.), which also went contrary to the course of events actually taken in America, was likewise suppressed and never published during Coke's life. As to its history after that a word later. Neither Coke nor Asbury believed in unnecessarily embarrassing himself by publishing documents which he thought would do no good.

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[8] Unless he means that after he "set apart" Vasey and Whatcoat as elders they assisted him. But his custom in using the word ministers I think forbids this.

(*c*) The Letter Testimonial to the Methodists in America. This is dated Bristol, September 10, 1784, is addressed "To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America." This is somewhat long and is very familiar, so I shall not quote it. He calls attention to the lapse of regular Episcopal organization in America, where "for some hundreds of miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper." It does not seem to occur to him that that condition had lasted for about eight years, and that a year or two longer till the English Episcopal Church could be reorganized (Seabury of Connecticut was ordained as bishop in this very year, 1784, by Episcopal bishops in Scotland) would make no difference one way or the other, nor that if his people had gotten along very well for many years without the sacraments, they could still grow in grace for a year or two more. Nor does it occur to him that there were other Christian Churches in America besides his Episcopal, like the Reformed German, the Reformed Dutch, the Presbyterian, etc., to whom application at least might be made either for the sacraments or for orders. Like a true Episcopalian, whether High or Low, no other church existed for Wesley except his own. The other Christian forces ministering to the spiritual needs of the people were for him non-existent. Therefore he must provide for the sacraments pending a new Episcopal Church in America. That he was probably thinking in this way is evidenced further by his desiring to accustom his people to the Episcopal liturgy and usages, as he sends over an abridged prayer book of the Church of England, which he thinks the "best constituted national church in the world," though he had criticized its legal establishment relentlessly and flouted all its rules when he thought the interests of his societies required. He therefore advises the use of that liturgy every Sunday, the administration of the Supper by the elders every Sunday, and reading the litany or penitential prayers on the sad days, namely, Wednesday and Friday. He never speaks of a new church as his purpose, but he thinks he violates no order "by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest"—a help for needy souls, a "rational and scriptural way," he says, "of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness." Here also he avoids the use of ecclesiastical terms, and says that he has "appointed" Coke and Asbury to be joint "superintendents" not of or over a church, but "over our brethren in North America," and Whatcoat and Vasey "to act as elders by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper." If it be said that in the last paragraph he speaks of no wish to connect his societies in America with the Church of England, you must notice carefully his words. He had asked Bishop Robert Lowth to ordain one of his preachers, but was refused. But as he thinks of it, this refusal was perhaps providential, for if they ordained them they would govern them, he says, and Wesley would not stand for that: one governor—himself—was enough. Besides, the Episcopal Church in America must be a native church, not organically connected with England. Wesley had the statesmanship to see that. For he says: "As our American brethren are now totally disentangled from both the state and English hierarchy [he does not say the English Church as a Church of Christ, but with the state and the hierarchy bound up with it], we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other." The state connection had been dissolved by the war, and no official relation was possible any longer with that state's hierarchy.

I said a moment ago that Wesley's Letter Testimonial as to Coke's ordination was not published. Neither Wesley nor Coke ever gave it forth. It remained with Coke's papers and was first published by the shoemaker-metaphysician, Samuel Drew, in his *Life of Coke,* 1818, p. 66. As its tenor was contrary to the course of events taken under the lead of Asbury, its publication would have been embarrassing. However, it was not destroyed, as was the Little Sketch, but kept by Coke for his justification if needed. Wesley was desirous, however, that his second Letter—his public appeal to all Methodists in America—should reach them immediately. And it did reach them in this sense, that it was read at the Conference of Preachers which Asbury insisted on having called to entertain Coke's mission. But it was not all read. An important section was omitted, another evidence of the fact that for America Wesley's star was declining. His word had been law in England, it was no longer so in America. This was the passage omitted: "And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national church in the world) which I advise all the traveling preachers to use on the Lord's Day, in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesday and Friday and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day." I suppose that Asbury knew that that large dose of liturgy was altogether too much for the Methodist societies on this side, and perhaps to save Wesley's face he thought it wiser to omit it than publish it and have it constantly disobeyed. But that omitted paragraph proved two things—Wesley's high regard for the liturgy of his church, and his desire to pave the way for the co-ordination of his now more ecclesiastically organized societies with the coming Anglican Church in America. As thus mutilated this Letter was published in the American *Minutes* next year (1785), though the full copy was printed by Wesley in the *Methodist Magazine*, London, 1785, p. 602. None of the official historians of the Methodist Episcopal Church —Lee, Bangs, Stevens—give the full text of the Letter or make note of the mutilation.

This is the only contemporary evidence we have of Wesley's intention in ordaining and sending over Coke. It not only gives no support to the view that Wesley intended to establish a new church in America, it gives support to the contrary view. For that reason Coke and Asbury destroyed, as seems probable, the Little Sketch which did contain Wesley's plan for America, and suppressed the Letter Testimonial of the Ordination of Coke ("To all to whom these presents shall come"), which said distinctly that the Americans were still to remain under Wesley's care and adhere to the Church of England. Coke did not destroy that Letter because it contained the only certificate he had of his setting apart and his authorization for his work in America, but he never published it, nor did Asbury. It was allowed to remain among his papers, where it was discovered by Samuel Drew and given out in his *Life of Rev. Thomas Coke, LLD.*, in 1817 (New York, 1818).

What, then, is the historical situation? Wesley had been importuned to help out the necessities of the societies of America for the sacraments. He knew that as a presbyter he had the right in theory to ordain presbyters, and church history taught him that originally bishops and presbyters were identical. He knew besides that he was a bishop or overseer in the literal sense of the Methodist people. He believed that the time had come to do something for his American sheep by sending over ordained ministers, and where he hesitated the "little magician" Coke, as he was called by his contemporaries on account of his wonderful influence over Wesley, helped him out by his plausible explanations. So in a private meeting in Bristol soon after four o'clock in the morning he, Coke, and Creighton formed themselves into a presbytery and gave presbyterial ordination to Whatcoat and Vasey and episcopal-presbyterial ordination to Coke. Furnished with a Sketch of what they were to do in America they embark from Bristol September 18, 1784, arrive in New York, November 3, and soon Coke meets Asbury and lays before him Wesley's Sketch. But Coke was no "little magician" to Asbury, who was too much for both him and his master. Asbury, though formerly a zealous Episcopalian, had become convinced by long residence in America that the Episcopal clergy (or what remained of them) were entirely out of sympathy with Methodism, with the exception of so few that they were negligible, that the Methodist spirit was uncongenial to the Anglican Church, that the liturgy and all this paraphernalia of services that Wesley recommended were not suitable to the societies here, that Wesley's idea of providing a few ordained men to grant the sacraments pending a union with the regular Episcopal Church to be later established was chimerical, that Wesley was too far off to exercise intelligent supervision here, that his ordinations, however, as a presbyter-bishop were valid, that he (Asbury) would not accept ordination as superintendent except he was elected to that office by the preachers in Conference, that the preachers must also judge of what was best for the future, that therefore a Conference must be called, and let them all decide together. For the first time in his life the "little Doctor" was dominated by a stronger will, by a wider intelligence (of course not in scholarship), by a larger and more pertinent experience. He had to give in and save what wrecks he could of Wesley's scheme. What he saved was this: (1) The liturgy was ordered to be observed. (It really was not observed except in a few city churches for a very short time.) (2) The new Church was still acknowledged as being under Wesley. (This was really only nominal, for Wesley now ceased to have any control of things in America, and in two or three years even this acknowledgment was rescinded.) A Conference was called, a new church was organized, and Wesley and any possibility of realizing his scheme of "remaining under my care and still adhering to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England" were once and forever bowed out of American church history.

The above conclusions are based purely on contemporary evidence, and as there is no contrary evidence so early, they are irrefragable. But to make assurance doubly sure a few corroborating items will be now put forward.

(1) It was the height of Coke's ambitions to be made a bishop. This he was able to accomplish so far as his "setting apart" as superintendent made him one. But this episcopate was not acknowledged by his own church, so he broached Bishop White secretly in 1791 for a union of the Methodists in America with the Protestant Episcopal Church by a reordination of our preachers, and though he did not speak in so many words of his own reordination as bishop, that is implied in the whole letter. He did, however, speak of it in a letter to Bishop Seabury, which he (Coke) later read to White.[9] When this came out much later, it raised a storm around Coke's head and almost destroyed his influence among Methodists in America. It is also well known that he wanted to be acknowledged bishop of the English Wesleyan

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[9] White, William, *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, ed. by B. F. De Costa, New York, 1880, pp. 196–98, 408–13.

Methodists after Wesley's death, 1791, and for that purpose summoned a secret meeting of preachers in Lichfield in 1794, which did meet his wishes so far as to pass a resolution favoring the appointment by the Conference of an order of bishops to ordain elders and deacons. This the Conference refused. Within a year of his death in 1814 he wrote the Earl of Liverpool, as well as William Wilberforce, stating that he was willing to "give up all for India," that if he could be the "means of raising a spiritual church in India, it would satisfy the utmost ambitions of my soul here below," "that if his Royal Highness the Prince Regent and the government should think proper to appoint me bishop in India, I should most cheerfully and most gratefully accept the offer, and that I should in case of my appointment to the episcopacy in India return most fully into the bosom of the Established Church and do everything in my power to promote its interests,"[10] etc. His ambitions led him not only heartily to second Wesley's proposal but to spur the latter when he hesitated, and we cannot eliminate the "little Doctor" from the new events in America.

(2) In his letter to White, Coke says that he went farther in separation of the Methodists from the Episcopal Church than Wesley intended, who "did not intend, I think, that an entire separation should take place." Coke also told White that even what Wesley did propose "went further than he would have gone if he had foreseen some events which followed." The third thing he told White was that Wesley was sorry for the separation.[11]

(3) So far as it might be claimed that Wesley's setting apart of Coke as superintendent meant the establishment of a new denomination in America, it is to be remembered that Wesley carefully guarded against that

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[10] S. Wilberforce, *Correspondence of William Wilberforce*, vol. ii, p. 256, quoted in Etheridge, *Life of the Thomas Coke*, D. C. L., London, 1860, b. 3, ch. 1 (small ed., pp. 470–73).

[11] White, *lib. cit.*, 408.

by distinguishing between a Church bishop and a superintendent of societies in the emergency of "sheep in the wilderness." He not only rebuked Asbury for taking the title bishop later, but Wesley solemnly enjoined Coke and his associates not on any account to take the title bishop. Wesley did not at all agree with Coke as to such prelatic titles.[12] For that reason he "set him apart" simply as superintendent.

(4) Henry Moore, the intimate friend, helper and biographer of Wesley, says that Coke deviated from Wesley's wishes.

> With respect to the title Bishop [says Moore] I know that Mr. Wesley enjoined the Doctor and his associates, and in the most solemn manner, that it should not be taken. In a letter to Mrs. Gilbert, the widow of the excellent Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq., of Antigua, a copy of which now lies before me, he states this in the strongest manner. [I wonder what else did he state. I wish Moore had given us that letter.] In this and in every deviation I cannot be the apologist of Doctor Coke, and I can state in opposition to all that Doctor Whitehead and Mr. Hampson have said, that Mr. Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things; nor was he the author of one line of all that Doctor Coke published in America on this subject. His views on these points were very different from those of his zealous son in the gospel. He knew that a work of God neither needed nor could be truly aided, nor could recommend itself to, pious minds by such additions.[13]

How far, outside of the bishop matter, did the deviations go? There were a number of them, Moore implies ("every deviation," "such additions," "never gave his sanction to any of these things"). Would that Moore had gone into particulars!

(5) The actual course which events took under the lead of Asbury agrees with what we know otherwise of Asbury's *volo episcopari*. His brother Englishmen in the

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[12] Moore, *Life of Wesley*, London ed., vol. ii, pp. 279–80, American ed., 1826, vol. ii, p. 198.

[13] Moore, *lib. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 198 (N. Y. ed., 1826).

work here, who went back during or after the Revolutionary War, knew him well, and they testified that he would supplant Wesley in the societies here just as soon as he could. What they prophesied came true. That was no ignoble ambition on his part. He felt that Wesley was too far away for intelligent oversight, and that God had placed him here for just that purpose. Therefore, the formal statement in the *Discipline* of 1784 that they held themselves still under Wesley, which meant nothing as to any real direction by Wesley, was taken out in 1787, though it was put back in a modified form for a year or two before Wesley died. Asbury had no intention whatever of continuing the old regime under Wesley. What he wanted was a new Episcopal Methodist Church with himself and Coke as bishops (not simply superintendents), which meant himself for the most part, as Coke was a large part of the time in England. In fact, by the time of the Christmas Conference, 1784, it was either known or supposed that Seabury had received ordination, and Asbury and Coke were approached then as to a union of Methodists with a soon to be organized Episcopal diocese in Maryland of which one bishop of the State would be a Methodist, preferably Coke. Said the Episcopal commissioners to Coke and Asbury: "The plan of church government which we had instituted in this state was very simple, and, as we trusted, a very rational plan: that it was to be exercised by a convention consisting of an equal number of laity and clergy, and having for their president a bishop elected by the whole body of the clergy."[14] Under the imposing presence of Asbury, all Coke could say to this was that he could not move in it till he heard from Wesley. But the proposition of the Episcopal brethren had not the slightest chance of success with Asbury, because among other things it would make him only a partner in a prelatic brotherhood where God had made him first, not to speak of laymen in the Conference, which would have been abhorrent to both Coke and Asbury.

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[14] (Kewley, the Rev. John), *Inquiry Into the Validity of Methodist Episcopacy*, Wilmington, 1807. Quoted with facts by Drinkhouse, *Hist.*, vol. i, pp. 267–68, note.

(6) Interesting light on Wesley's intention is thrown on the 1784 incident by exactly parallel instances for Scotland and other lands. In Scotland the Episcopal clergy repelled the Methodists from their sacraments, and the Presbyterians required attendance at preliminary services. Besides, the Scottish Methodists looked upon the Episcopal Church ritual and Supper as prelacy, only less evil than popery, and not far from antichrist, and would not attend. What did Wesley? Exactly as for America; he ordained in 1785 Pawson, Hanby and Taylor as presbyters to look after the sheep in Scotland and give them the sacraments. Did that mean a new church, a new hierarchy, a total separation as religious societies from their former relations? Not at all. It was simply a provision to meet the present distress, and conferred neither on Scottish Methodism nor on those who had received the ordinations the slightest pre-eminence. He even ordained Mather in 1788 as superintendent for England (!), but with no idea either of displacing himself or making a new denomination.

In fact, in all these things Wesley acted according to his light as a sincere, loyal, though most inconsistent member of the Church of England. No one in England in the eighteenth century did more to undermine her power and withdraw members from her communion, but no one intended it less. Man proposes, God disposes. Wesley purposed one thing; the Bishop of our souls, He who within the shadows keeps watch above his own, purposed quite another.

NOTE.—Though this is the only view of the history consistent with the original documents, it has been asked, Why did not Wesley protest to Coke and publish abroad the fact that Coke had exceeded his instructions. Besides, when Charles Wesley criticized his brother for what Coke had done, did not Wesley write to Charles? "I believe Doctor Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has *done* nothing rashly that I know, but he has *spoken* rashly [referring to the unsavory facts about the character of the Episcopal ministers in America mentioned by Coke in his ordination sermon in Baltimore], which he retracted the moment I spoke to him of it. He is now such a right-hand man to me as Thomas Walsh was. If you will not or cannot help me yourself, do not hinder those who can and will."[15] But the letter of Charles of September 8, 1785, to which this was a reply, did not refer to what Coke and Asbury had done in America almost a year before (though, of course, Charles abhorred that), but to Coke's talking up a similar settlement of Methodism in the United Kingdom—his "resolution to get all the Methodists of the three kingdoms into a distinct compact body." "Does [present tense] he do nothing rashly?" Suggested by Wesley's remark to Charles in letter of August 19, 1785, that "I [Wesley] do nothing rashly." Besides, Wesley's words about Coke doing nothing rashly are no proof that Wesley was satisfied with what was done in America, that he did not complain privately to Coke, much less that Coke under compulsion of conditions here did not deviate from his plans. Now that it was done, however, Wesley took it as done, accommodated himself to it, publicly stood by Coke as his friend and well-meaning helper. No doubt Coke reported the facts to Wesley that American conditions made it absolutely impossible to do as he proposed, that they did the next best thing, carrying out his instructions in the spirit if not in the letter, that the Conference still professed itself to be under Wesley, that it was wiser to let the Americans judge so long as they were still willing to acknowledge him (Wesley) as head, that Wesley had by sending him over after Coke's letter promised to stand by him, and that finally he must shield him (Coke) from the indignation of his opponents. Wesley was both too honorable and too chivalrous to turn down an appeal like this. Therefore to his critics he stood by Coke, though we know from other sources that he lamented even unto grief and tears,[16] and that he let both Coke and Asbury feel his bitter disappointment, which shadowed with a cloud of regret his last days, so far as anything could sadden a spirit so constantly active, so optimistic, so imperturbably cheerful.

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[15] Quoted in Tyerman, vol. 3, p. 447.

[16] See same, vol. 3, p. 441, note.

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